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The two theories of divine love that are examined in this book have their foundations in Greek, Jewish, Christian and Muslim ideas. Al-Ghazâlî (twelfth century) was influenced mainly by Plato and Ibn Sina's teachings, while al-Dabbâgh (thirteenth century), who accepted some Ghazâlîan notions, developed a theory of divine love that can be traced back to Neoplatonism. Both scholars created complete theories of divine love that include definitions of love, its causes and signs, the ways to love God, God's love for man, and kinds of love.

**Binyamin Abrahamov** is Professor of Islamic Theology and Qur'ânic Studies at Bar-Ilan University, Israel. He received his PhD from Tel Aviv University in 1982.

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*Divine Love in Islamic Mysticism*  
*The Teachings of Al-Ghazâlî and Al-Dabbâgh*

Binyamin Abrahamov

RoutledgeCurzon

*Sufi*

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TO OLIVER LEAMAN

And with thanks to David Brauner for  
correcting my English

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## PREFACE

In one of the earliest works on love in Arabic literature, the author Abû al-Hasan Alî ibn Muḥammad al-Daylamî (fl. late fourth/tenth century) states that 'love is the most famous and the highest situation among people, be they élite or commoners, ignorant or knowers . . .'<sup>1</sup> Al-Daylamî expresses the first part of the common truth that in all its forms love plays an important role in society which is preceded only by the instinct to live.<sup>2</sup> Love has been discussed in various fields of research, such as psychology, ethics, theology, philosophy, religion, and medicine. Many such discussions have involved interdisciplinary elements. And as we shall see, there exist connections between the two basic divisions of love, that is, profane and divine love.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the Şûfîs regard divine love as one of their important stations or as the most important station. Nevertheless, as far as we know, complete theories of sacred love have not developed in early Islamic mysticism, and this epoch is marked with statements which express different aspects of the subject. Theories of divine love have appeared in Şûfîsm since the fourth/tenth century. Despite the important role that love plays in the practice and understanding of Şûfîsm, research into this topic remains very scanty. Apart from Bell's thorough work, *Love Theory in Later Hanbalite Islam*, which can help any scholar who inquires into divine love in Islam, and some articles which



deal with Ibn Sînâ's epistle on love, there are no other works on specific theories of love.

The present contribution aims at examining two Sûfî theories of divine love, that of Abû Hâmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazâlî (d. 505/1111) and of Abû Zayd Abd al-Raḥmân ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣârî known as al-Dabbâgh (d. 696/1296). I chose these two scholars because, unlike earlier Muslim scholars, both introduce complete theories of divine love and because, although al-Ghazâlî exerts great influence on al-Dabbâgh, the latter differs in some basic characteristics of his Sûfî theory of divine love.

An introduction presenting the theme in Greek philosophy, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam precedes the discussion on al-Ghazâlî and al-Dabbâgh. Within Islam, sacred love as it appears in the Qur'ân, Ḥadîth, theology, philosophy, and mysticism is then further examined in greater depth. I hope that this introduction supplies sufficient background to enable the reader, even the non-specialist in Islamic mysticism, to comprehend the theories of our two thinkers.

# I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Love in Greek philosophy

Since Sûfî divine love in Islam owes much to ancient Greek thinking, a statement to be proved later, one should naturally set forth the main features of this philosophical tradition. As Singer states, every discussion of love, whether courtly love, romantic love or religious love must begin with Plato. Most of the material on love is found in the *Symposium*.<sup>1</sup> In this dialogue, Aristophanes sets forth a myth according to which in the beginning the human race was divided into three sexes, male, female, and hermaphroditic. Each human being was spherical having four hands, four legs, and a single head. Since they were powerful, they attacked the gods but were defeated and almost destroyed, only to be saved due to Zeus' mercy. To prevent future rebellion by the spherical human beings, Zeus divided each of them into two parts. After that each part longed for the part from which it had been disconnected. The division of the three sexes explains the existence of heterosexuality, homosexuality, and lesbianism; each half of a spherical being longs for the missing half. If a man belongs to the spherical being which was composed of male and female, he will desire a woman, and the same understanding applies to homosexuality and lesbianism.<sup>2</sup> 'And the reason is that human nature was originally one and we were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called love.'<sup>3</sup> Socrates goes further



than Aristophanes, who regards love as desire for the half or the whole which are missing, stating that love is yearning for goodness.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, *eros* means man's will to always possess the Good.<sup>5</sup> The highest object of love is the Good which is identified with the absolute beauty. The Good or the Beautiful should be found in all spheres of human life. How a man can find the Good is a theme to which Plato devotes much space in his writings. According to Plato, the lover passes through several phases until he reaches absolute beauty. Plato's lover begins with physical beauty. Then after freeing himself from looking at a specific beautiful thing or human being, because there are many, he sees no reason to prefer one to another. Therefore, beauty of the soul, meaning man's virtues, must be estimated more than the beauty of the body. From this stage he moves to the contemplation of social and moral beauty expressed in institutions and noble activities. Higher than this stage is the stage of acquisition of knowledge and sciences in which a man is free from contemplating specific instances of beauty whether of body, soul, or society. This fourth stage will finally bring a realization that there is absolute beauty in which all features of beauty are included and which does not change and is eternal. This absolute beauty is one of Plato's Forms or Ideas.<sup>6</sup> Two main characteristics are discerned in Plato's theory of love: The first is the desire of the soul to attain union with its beloved, which here means the absolute beauty, and the second is the intellectual process of love. Although the Platonic lover begins his way from material objects, the object of his desire is not material but spiritual perfection, and the means leading to such perfection, notwithstanding motivated by emotions,<sup>7</sup> is the intellect which creates knowledge. 'Platonic eros is basically a love of abstract science more than anything else.'<sup>8</sup> There is a common ground to both Plato and the ancient Mysteries which is the salvation of the soul from its bodily prison and its return to its heavenly abode. The

difference between them is only in the means; whereas in the Mysteries the soul's deliverance is attained through initiations, purifications, and rituals, in Plato it is through philosophy.<sup>9</sup> What characterizes Plato's philosophy is the duality of the material world and the world of the Ideas. Man's function is to move from the sensual world to the world of the Ideas. He can do this through the motivation of *eros*, the inclination of man's soul to the spiritual world, which inheres in his soul, because of the latter's divine source, and which is kindled by seeing sensual beauty. The movement is only upwards; the world of the Ideas does not help man to achieve his goal.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from being a motivation for attaining God or the absolute good, *eros* can also be characterized by its being an acquisitive love; man longs for acquiring what is valuable in his eyes and what he has not. It is not a spontaneous love but a motivated love. Because *eros* is acquisitive, it is also egocentric; it is directed toward the happiness of man.<sup>11</sup>

Following Plato's doctrine that love is a search for goodness, Aristotle, makes a distinction between three types of love or friendship (*philia*). According to him there are three objects of love – usefulness, pleasantness, and goodness. Each motivates a different kind of friendship. The first and the second types of friendship are based on self-interest of the lover, where the lover expects benefits and pleasure from the beloved, whereas in the third type of friendship, which Aristotle calls perfect friendship, the lover loves not because his beloved is useful or pleasant to him, but because of what the beloved is, by virtue of his personality. Only virtuous persons are interested in one another as persons, and not as instruments.<sup>12</sup> Friendship is conditioned by reciprocity and this in turn derives from rationality which exists in virtuous people. Just as Platonic lovers are in love with the Ideas, Aristotle's good men or women love the virtuous character.<sup>13</sup> The view that only



the good deserves love was disproved later by the Christian doctrine of *agape*.

Another view of Aristotle which is relevant to our discussion is the view that love is a cosmic force, existing also in matter, which has a desire for the divine, the good, and the desirable. Thus the idea of *eros* applies to the physical world. He ascribes the motion of the heavens to their love for the Prime Mover or the Pure Form.<sup>14</sup> Just as the beloved object moves the lover so the Pure Form moves matter to receive its form by being loved. The Pure Form causes the desire of matter to receive form because of the Pure Form's perfection. Plato's *eros* turns out to be a cosmic power inhering in each thing. The parable of the ladder which in Plato illustrates the ascent of the human soul occurs in Aristotle as a real scale of existents in which the lower desires the higher.<sup>15</sup> This kind of love is one of the three kinds mentioned in Neoplatonism, the two others are earthly love, which is expressed in human beings and animals in the desire for the preservation and continuation of species, and rational love, the love for the Divine and for the immortal forms.<sup>16</sup>

The *eros* motif is the core of Plotinus' thought, according to which the most important thing is the return of the soul to God.<sup>17</sup> What characterizes the period between Plato and Plotinus is the discussion of the sharp duality between the Divine and the material world, and the attempt to span both with a series of intermediate beings. The span or bridge is two-way: a descent from God to matter, that is the creation of the world through a process of emanation, and also an ascent of man's soul back to God. In other words, all things spring from the One, the Divine, and return to the One. To know both the worthlessness of all material things and yet recognize their divine source<sup>18</sup> are two requisites for the soul in order to ascend to the One. Contrary to the Gnostics and the world-despisers, Plotinus admits the beauty of the world but regards it as an image of the

absolute beauty, whose source is the rational spiritual world.<sup>19</sup> The true object of love is the beauty of the spiritual world. The more man's soul severs itself from materiality, for example, bodily desires, the closer it comes to the true beauty. Hence, Plotinus identifies the true beauty with the Good. The virtuous person is the beautiful one. The inner inclination to beauty and goodness, namely *eros*, motivates the soul to long for the highest world.<sup>20</sup> If a man wishes to attain this world, he must ascend in reverse order through the stages of the emanation, that is, from beautiful things to the Soul which causes their existence, from the Soul to the Intellect, and from the Intellect to the One. But perfect union with the One can be attained only through ecstasy.<sup>21</sup>

## 2. Love in Judaism

Since divine love is mainly the product of the Judeo-Christian tradition,<sup>22</sup> it is worthwhile outlining the basic doctrines and teachings of both Judaism and Christianity on love. In both Biblical and Post-Biblical Judaism love is the principal axis in the relationship between God and Israel.<sup>23</sup> Although there is no theory of divine love in Jewish literature until the Middle Ages,<sup>24</sup> some significant motifs often recur. In the following we shall refer mainly to man's love for God and God's love for man, the causes of both kinds of love and their expressions.

*Deuteronomy* serves as an important source for many later authorities. The cause of Israel's love for God appears as God's request,<sup>25</sup> and moreover as His commandment.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, love for God is expressed through carrying out the commandments.<sup>27</sup> This kind of love, which is manifested through the fulfillment of precepts, obedience and submission to God's will is called by scholars *nomos*. Obedience to God is manifested through keeping the



commandments, because they express God's will. Subservience to God's will is also expressed through piety and devotion which can reach the degree of the believer's readiness to sacrifice himself or his most beloved thing in order to please God. There is no wonder thus that Abraham is the best example of such love.<sup>28</sup> Although Abraham is called in *Genesis* 22.13 God-fearing, Post-Biblical tradition regards his consent to sacrifice his son the greatest act of love for God.<sup>29</sup> In like manner, Isaac loves God, and Jacob is also considered the lover of God.<sup>30</sup> Thus in loving God a believer – for example Job – should be ready to suffer and to bear his sufferings in patience,<sup>31</sup> a notion to be found later in *Ṣūfī* literature.

The believer loves all what comes from the Beloved, and hence he loves the Tora and studies it. 'O, how I love your Tora, it is my meditation all the day,' says the poet of *Psalms* (119.97).<sup>32</sup> That is why his love for God is expressed in the imitation of God's qualities.<sup>33</sup> However, the Tora itself serves as a cause for the love of God. In *Seder Eliyahu Rabba* (or *Tanna de-be Eliyahu*), a *Midrash* probably dating from the tenth century, it is stated that if the Gentiles were able to understand the profound meaning of the Tora, they would love God. This *Midrash* also states that due to their love for God, Israel were ready to accept the burden of keeping the commandments.<sup>34</sup>

Israel loves God because of the miracles He did for them, and in general because of His greatness and power.<sup>35</sup> In the weekday morning service it is stated that God's act brings man to love Him: 'And You have brought us close to Your great Name forever in truth, to offer praiseful thanks to you, and proclaim Your oneness with love.'<sup>36</sup> Elsewhere, in the same service, it is said that God will imbue the heart of the believer with love and awe of Him.<sup>37</sup> The same idea recurs in the *Mussaf* service of *Rosh Hodesh*: 'You will bring them an eternal love.'<sup>38</sup> However, the notion

sometimes appears that a believer loves, or should love God spontaneously, without reason, meaning without expecting a reward. The *Mishna* in *Avot*<sup>39</sup> says: 'Be not like servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward; instead be like servants who serve their master not for the sake of receiving a reward. And let the awe of the Heaven be upon you.'<sup>40</sup> Here the word 'love' is not mentioned, but the Rabbis insert it into the interpretation of this paragraph.<sup>41</sup> The same idea is found in Philo's *On Particular Laws* (194–7) and *Midrash Tadsheh*; both sources regard the burnt sacrifice (or the elevation offering – '*olah*')<sup>42</sup> as an expression of disinterested love for God.<sup>43</sup>

We shall turn now to God's love for Israel dividing the theme, as we have dealt with Israel's love for God, into causes and expressions. Also in this issue *Deuteronomy* plays an important role. One of the reasons for God's love for Israel is His love for the Fathers and the oath he swore to them: 'And because He loved your Fathers, He chose their seed after them . . .' (*Deuteronomy*, 4.37). That God's choice means His love<sup>44</sup> is proved from the following verses: 'The Lord did not set His love<sup>45</sup> upon you, or choose you, because you were more in number than any people; for you were the fewest of all peoples; but because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn to your Fathers . . .' (*Deuteronomy*, 7.7–8).

Whereas God's love which originates in His oath to the Fathers is directed to all kinds of Israeli persons, be they good or evil, the notion appears many times that God loves those who love Him, namely the righteous. See, for example, *Proverbs*, 8.17: 'I love those who love Me; and those who seek Me early shall find Me.'<sup>46</sup> *Psalms* 146.8: 'The Lord opens the eyes of the blind: the Lord raises those who are bowed down: the Lord loves the righteous.' The Apocrypha, too, expresses the idea that God loves those



who are wronged and those who suffer.<sup>47</sup> Also whoever studies the Tora disinterestedly is loved by God. 'Rabbi Meir said: Whoever engages in Tora study for its own sake merits many things . . . He is called friend and beloved . . .'<sup>48</sup> However, according to Biblical and Post-Biblical texts, God's love for Israel sometimes occurs without reason, without any previous kind of behavior on the part of man. God says in Hosea's prophecy (14.5): '... I will love them freely.' In Jeremiah 31.2, God's love for Israel appears as everlasting, and as a result, He loves them anytime without paying attention to what they do. Eternal love is not conditioned by any circumstances. This view appears also in the Apocrypha (Baruch I, 78.3): '... God has loved us from eternity . . .' And in the Wisdom of Solomon (11.24) it is stated that 'You love all the existents, and you do not abhor anything of your creation.' Hence, God's love for people does not depend on their acts, a notion which is reminiscent of the *agape* idea which we shall immediately examine. However, the universality of God's love, which appears several times in the Apocrypha, is not so emphasized in the Talmud and the Midrash. A saying of Rabbi Akiva combines the universal and particular aspects of God's love: 'Beloved is man, for he was created in God's image . . . Beloved are the people of Israel, for they are described as children of the Omnipresent . . .' But preference is given to God's love for Israel.<sup>49</sup>

God's love for Israel is expressed in several ways, the most important being His choosing of Israel (*Deuteronomy*, 4.37). In the liturgy, the weekday morning service, God's choice is plainly stated: 'You have chosen us from among every people and tongue.'<sup>50</sup> In the Festivals' service, choice is identical to love: 'You have chosen us from all the peoples, You loved us, and found favor in us.'<sup>51</sup> God's choice is connected in turn with His deliverance of Israel from Egypt as Hosea (11.1) puts it: 'When

Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.'

God's love is also manifested through the sufferings He brings on His beloved, as a father who punishes his son in order to educate him. This kind of relationship explains why the lover should keep the beloved's commandments. The basis of this view is *Proverbs* 3.11-12: 'My son, do not despise the Lord's instruction; nor be weary of his chastisement: for the Lord reproves him whom He loves, and He resembles a father who loves<sup>52</sup> his son.' This notion recurs also in *Psalms* and *Job* and in Post-Biblical literature in the *Talmud* and *Midrash*.<sup>53</sup>

In sum, in Biblical and Post-Biblical literature we find several ideas concerning both God's love for man and man's love for God, but these have not crystallized into a theory of love in any of the works cited. However, it seems that some signs of the motifs (*nomos*, *agape*, and even *eros*<sup>54</sup>) which we shall find in Christianity and Islam were already found in early Jewish literature. Our next discussion deals with love in Christianity according to the *New Testament*.

### 3. Love in Christianity

According to Nygren, the principal motif in the *New Testament* is *agape*. This term refers to God's love for man. *Agape* is God's disinterested love. God loves because of His nature, and His love is expressed not in getting but in doing good. Being indifferent to the object of His love, God loves equally the good and the wicked. Whereas Hellenism is a religion which seeks God for the sake of man's happiness, and thus it may be perceived in terms of egocentricity, in Christianity salvation comes from God, and thus may be perceived as theocentricity. Although the motif of *agape* occurs in Judaism, Judaism is also an egocentric religion,



for its basic motif is *nomos*, that is, man's love for God is achieved through man's carrying out of the precepts.<sup>55</sup>

The *agape* motif can be summed up in four basic principles: a. *Agape* is spontaneous and unmotivated. There is no reason for God's love except His nature. The object of love, that is man, should not have special characteristics in order to be loved by God; b. This principle is connected with the first one; *agape* is indifferent to value. The evil person receives God's love as well as the saint. 'He makes His sun rise on good and bad alike, and sends the rain on the honest and dishonest' (Matt., 5.45);<sup>56</sup> c. *Agape* is creative, in other words, it creates value in the object of love. When God forgives a person, He creates a new situation changing the person's value; and d. *Agape* initiates fellowship with God. God's act causes a man to love Him. A man cannot love God without His assistance.<sup>57</sup> Some of Jesus' parables can be explained in the light of the principles of *agape*. For example, in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matt., 20. 1-16), the laborers receive equal pay for unequal work. The householder's act is not motivated by justice or merit, but by his generosity, just as God's love is not motivated by justice and merit, but by His generosity.<sup>58</sup>

The love of the Christian for God is a reflection of God's love, which by definition must be spontaneous and unmotivated. Whereas in human love there is an egocentric reason, the love for God should not aim to attain something; it is submission of man to God. Likewise, the second part of the commandment of love, the love for the neighbor, is characterized by *agape*. For example, just as God loves the sinners, so a man must love his enemies. In both kinds of love, it is God's love for man which causes him to love God or his neighbor.<sup>59</sup>

A further development of the *agape* motif occurs in the

teaching of Paul, the persecutor of the Church who became its disciple and apostle. Paul was fully aware of *agape*, for he felt that his conversion was caused by God's love. Apart from seemingly making *agape* the technical term for Christian love, Paul identifies *agape* with the theology of the Cross. This means that God's love for humanity is expressed through sacrificing His son for the sake of humanity, and more precisely, for the sake of the weak, the ungodly, the sinners, and the enemies. 'He has reconciled us men to Himself through Christ . . .' (2 Cor., 5.18).<sup>60</sup>

Paul's attitude toward man's love also marks a shift in emphasis away from Jesus' view as it appears in the Synoptic Gospels. Contrary to Jesus who places man's love for God above love for his neighbor, Paul thinks that the commandment to love one's neighbor takes precedence. The commandments of the Law 'are all summed up in the one rule, Love your neighbor as yourself' (Rom., 13.9).<sup>61</sup>

The final formulation of the *agape* motif occurs in the Gospel of John who identifies *agape* with God's essence; God is love means that His love is eternal and exists even without an object. Nygren points out that if the eternal love of the Father for the Son is the prototype of love, then one may conclude that the inherent worth of the Son makes him the object of the Father's love, and hence God's love for man may not be considered spontaneous and unmotivated. That this possibility holds water is proved by John's statements which are associated with reasons, for example 'The Father Himself loves you, because you have loved me' (John, 16.27).<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, when John differentiates between the love for the material world, which is forbidden, and the love for God, he inadvertently distinguishes between two kinds of objects, thus defining love in terms of the object of love which contradicts the idea of *agape* as a love independent of the value of its object. Another infringement on the *agape* motif is



particularism which is expressed in the love among the Christian brethren; here also love looses its unmotivated character, for one loves his neighbor because he is a Christian, not because he is a human being. Thus elements of *eros* penetrated into the Christian idea of love.<sup>63</sup>

For the reader's convenience I would like now to sum up the differences between *eros* and *agape* in an antithetical arrangement as presented by Nygren.<sup>64</sup>

<i>Eros</i> is acquisitive and longing.	<i>Agape</i> is sacrificial giving.
<i>Eros</i> is an upward movement.	<i>Agape</i> comes down.
<i>Eros</i> is man's way to God.	<i>Agape</i> is God's way to man.
<i>Eros</i> is man's effort: it assumes that man's salvation is his own work.	<i>Agape</i> is God's grace: salvation is the work of divine love.
<i>Eros</i> is egocentric love, a form of self assertion of the highest, noblest, sublimest kind.	<i>Agape</i> is unselfish love, it 'seeketh not its own,' it gives itself away.
<i>Eros</i> seeks to gain its life, a life divine, immortalized.	<i>Agape</i> lives the life of God, therefore dares to 'lose it.'
<i>Eros</i> is the will to get and possess which depends on want and need.	<i>Agape</i> is freedom in giving, which depends on wealth and plenty.
<i>Eros</i> is primarily man's love; God is the object of <i>Eros</i> . Even when it is attributed to God.	<i>Agape</i> is primarily God's love; God is <i>agape</i> . Even when it is attributed to man.
<i>Eros</i> is patterned on human love.	<i>Agape</i> is patterned on divine love.

<i>Eros</i> is determined by the quality, the beauty and worth of its object; it is not spontaneous, but 'evoked,' 'motivated.'	<i>Agape</i> is sovereign in relation to its object, and is directed to both 'the evil and the good'; it is spontaneous, 'overflowing,' 'unmotivated.'
<i>Eros</i> recognizes value in its object – and loves it.	<i>Agape</i> loves – and creates value in its object.

*Eros* and *agape* have not remained antithetical for a long time. Having been a pupil of Neo-platonism, St. Augustine incorporated it into Christian dogma. He states that the Latin word *caritas* constitutes the combination between *eros* and *agape*. *Agape* is directed toward man and causes him to love and to long for God properly. Without *agape* man runs the risk of being involved in earthly love. Thus the function of *agape* is to purify *eros*. To a large extent, St. Augustine's *caritas* became the established doctrine of the Catholic church.<sup>65</sup>

## 4. Love in Islam

### a. Qur'ân and Ḥadîth

Since our main concern is to examine Islamic thinkers on divine love, we shall considerably widen the scope of our survey of Islamic views on love. We shall examine love in the Qur'ân, the Ḥadîth (traditions which go back to the Prophet), theology, philosophy, and Ṣûfîsm. The first two sources do not supply us with much material on love. One can discern three issues: a. The *nomos* motif occurs once in a manifest way, but many times through the notion that God loves the righteous and hates the wicked, that is, He loves those who carry out His commandments. 'Say: If you



love God, follow me, and God will love you, and forgive your sins' (Qur'ân 3.31).<sup>66</sup> 'God loves not the evildoers' (Qur'ân 3.134). 'God loves the good-doers' (Qur'ân 3.140); b. Man's love for God is conditioned by God's love for man. '... God will assuredly bring a people He loves, and who love Him . . .' (Qur'ân 5.54); and c. An identification of belief in God and love for Him. '... Those that believe love God more ardently' (Qur'ân 2.165). God appears as either lover or beloved in Qur'ân 85.14: 'And He is the All-forgiving, the All-loving (*wadûd*).<sup>67</sup> *Wadûd* can be interpreted to mean either lover, if we regard the adjective *wadûd* as nomen agentis (*fâ'il*), or beloved, if we regard this adjective as nomen patientis (*maf'ûl*).<sup>67</sup> It is obvious that such scanty material, at least concerning the plain meaning of the Qur'ânic verses,<sup>68</sup> could not be the source of the great theories of divine love which were developed later in Islam. The Ḥadîth adds to the Qur'ân some other ideas, but also here the information is very limited. I rely on al-Ghazâlî's introduction to his *K. al-maḥabba*, assuming that he uses the basic and most important traditions on love. The love for God appears as a condition of belief. Asked what belief is, Muḥammad answers: 'Belief means that God and His messenger are beloved by you more than anything else.'<sup>69</sup> Thus belief is described in terms of love. In one tradition the order to love God – which is most prevalent in the Bible – appears associated with its reason: 'Love God, because of the favors He bestows on you, and love me [that is Muḥammad], because God loves me.'<sup>70</sup> Another Biblical notion is the statement that whoever loves God experiences affliction.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, the lover of God is not afraid of death, for it causes him to meet God. Abraham is the model of such ardent love. The Prophet is said to have prayed as follows: 'O God, give<sup>72</sup> me Your love, and the love of those who love You, and the love which makes me come close to You, and makes Your love beloved to me more than

cold water.'<sup>73</sup> We shall see that these traditions have no influence on al-Ghazâlî's theory of love, however he brings them forward to comply with his usual order of writing by which he opens each of his books in the *Iḥyâ'* with fragments of evidence from the Qur'ân and the Ḥadîth.

### b. Theology

Notwithstanding Qur'ânic verses and traditions whose literal meanings indicate that God loves His creatures, some groups of theologians such as the Jahmites, Mu'tazilites, and some Ash'arites who denied God's love, identified His love with His will or benefaction.<sup>74</sup> Concerning the interpretation of God's love, the Ash'arite theologian al-Juwaynî (d. 478/1085) introduces two views: a. God's love and contentment means His benefaction. 'God loves a person' (*aḥabba allâh 'abdan*) does not mean feeling sympathy with or inclination toward a man, but granting favors to him. And man's love for God is expressed through obedience to Him.<sup>75</sup> This is because God is too exalted to incline to man or to be the object of man's inclination. Al-Juwaynî seems to say that God's inclination would indicate that He lacks something, a notion which cannot be conceived of God who is perfect. On the other hand, man's inclination would infringe on God's transcendence held by the theologians. Al-Ghazâlî reasons that the objection of the theologians to divine love is based on a doctrine which says that an entity which resembles nothing and nothing resembles it cannot be the object of love.<sup>76</sup> The Ash'arite theologian al-Bâqillânî (d. 404/1013) explains that since there is no change in God's essence, it is impossible to ascribe to Him feelings which enjoin changes in one's essence.<sup>77</sup> b. God's love is explained as His will. However, this will is called love and



contentment when it is connected with a favor bestowed on man, and when it is connected with punishment afflicting man, it is called anger.<sup>78</sup> It is worth noting that Ṣūfīs were persecuted for their theory of love.<sup>79</sup>

Ibn Taymiyya (729/1328) does not accept this view. He argues that the identification of love with will denies God one of His attributes, and also results in God's love of injustice, for everything in the world is willed by Him. For theories of love in Ibn Taymiyya and other Ḥanbalite scholars the reader should consult Bell's excellent work. We would like, however, to cite Bell's table in which he shows the differences between the Ḥanbalites, who represent the *nomos* motif on the one hand, and the Ash'arites on the other who identify God's love with His will. For will Bell uses the Greek word *thelema*.

<i>Thelema</i>	<i>Nomos</i>
God has no anthropomorphic or anthropopathic attributes. He does not love nor does he experience 'pleasure,' the product of love satisfied.	All the traditional attributes of God truly apply to him, although they are not to be explained. <sup>80</sup> God loves and experiences 'joy.'
The Koranic references to God's love for men must be interpreted to mean his 'willing good' to them.	God's love for men is real and is to be distinguished from the creative aspect of his will. It is a natural consequence of his self-love. <sup>81</sup>
God wills good to some men and evil to others for no cause or purpose.	God's acts for the sake of 'wise purpose' ( <i>hikma</i> ) <sup>82</sup> which he loves.
God cannot be the object of love.	Men can truly love God in and for himself.

Man's pleasure in the beatific vision is not the result of love satisfied but an independent pleasure created simultaneously.	The pleasure of the vision is the result of the consummation of man's love to God.
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### c. Philosophy

As for the philosophical material, there are two basic works which underpin an introduction to al-Ghazâlî's and al-Dabbâgh's treatises on divine love. These are: a. the thirty-seventh epistle of *Rasâil ikhwân al-ṣafâ'* called *Fî mâhiyyat al-'ishq* (On the Essence of Love);<sup>83</sup> and b. Ibn Sînâ's *Risâla fî'l-'ishq* (An Epistle on Love).<sup>84</sup> The first Arabic philosopher al-Kindî (d. 260/873) wrote a treatise on love, but it is not extant.<sup>85</sup> There are some scattered notes on the theme in the famous Neoplatonic work called *The Theology of Aristotle*, which is actually an Arabic version of parts of Plotinus' *Enneads*.<sup>86</sup> These notes concentrate on the issue of beauty. The beauty of a material thing is inferior to the beauty of its idea. Beauty originates in the form, not in the matter, consequently, it exists also in immaterial substances. Since bodily beauty derives from the beauty of the soul, the latter is superior to the former. Also the internal beauty of a human being, the beauty of character and disposition is preferable to external beauty. The degree of beauty increases according to its place in the cosmic hierarchy of beings. Hence, God is the most beautiful. Just as the beauty of immaterial beings is superior to the beauty of material beings, so love for the former, which is intellectual love (= true love), is preferable to love for the latter. Love is regarded in this work as an eternal force and moreover, the high world is identical with love.<sup>87</sup>

Also in al-Fârâbî (d. 339/950) is found no theory of love, only scattered references. According to him, the form



of love exists in the One, and drives from the One in an emanative manner. The One Himself is the common object of the love of all beings, although each being has an object of love which is higher than itself in the cosmic hierarchy. Love for the First causes human beings to reach a certain amount of conjunction with the separate intellects. In the human sphere, love makes people be connected to and harmonized with each other.<sup>88</sup>

In the 'Epistle on the Essence of Love' (*Risâla fî mâhiyyat al-'ishq*) written by 'The Brethren of Purity', we encounter for the first time a theory of love in Islamic philosophy. They present some of the philosophers' definitions of *'ishq* among which, for example, there occurs the definition of *ishq* as 'excess in love (*ifrât al-mahabba*) and strong inclination (*shiddat al-mayl*) toward a species of the existents . . . and toward a particular thing . . .'.<sup>89</sup> The preferable definition according to them is 'strong longing for union' (*shiddat al-shawq ilâ al-ittihâd*). Since union is characterized by spiritual inclination and psychic states,<sup>90</sup> they put forward the kinds of souls and their objects of love (*ma'shûqât*). This is the Platonic division of the soul into three faculties or the division into three kinds of souls: a. nutritive-appetitive soul (*al-nafs al-nabâtiyya al-shah-wâniyya*) which has as its objects eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse; b. emotional-animal soul (*al-nafs al-ghadabiyya al-hayawâniyya*) whose love is directed toward victory, overcoming, and leadership; and c. rational soul (*al-nafs al-nâtîqa*) which seeks knowledge and virtues. The essential causes (*'illa* pl. *'ilal*) which make man incline toward a certain object of love originate in the stars. Thus love of a person for another is explained, for example, as the result of their being born in the same sign of the zodiac. According to the Brethren, the stars have a powerful influence, generally on all the beings beneath the celestial sphere of the moon, and particularly on the human essence.<sup>91</sup>

Another reason for love, apart from love for beautiful things, is the affinity between the lover and the beloved (*ittifâqât bayna al-'âshiq wa'l-ma'shûq*), a reason which we shall encounter later in the writings of both al-Ghazâlî and al-Dabbâgh. For instance, a man loves what befits his senses, and there are differences between persons in this concern. Also there is inborn inclination (*nuzû'*) of effects (*ma'lûl* pl. *ma'lûlât*) to their causes, and inborn compassion of causes for their effects; offspring incline to their parents, and parents have compassion for their offspring. The weak need the help of the strong. In such a manner it is possible to account for the need of young people to teachers, and the desire of adults, in nations in which there is passion for knowledge, to educate the youth and to refine their character. This explains the inclination of adults to youth.<sup>92</sup> The love of women toward men<sup>93</sup> is also accounted for by the existence of the inborn disposition in women the aim of which is the preservation of the human species.<sup>94</sup>

The Brethren detail many kinds of love, such as the love of parents for their children, the love of leaders for leadership, the love of scholars for their work, and so on, claiming that if *'ishq* were not existent, all the kinds of love would not exist. Since love makes man succeed in various areas, the Brethren considered it a grace bestowed by God on man which manifests divine providence. As we have seen, each faculty of the soul loves what befits its character. However, all these diverse faculties have something in common; theirs is the love for the continuation (*baqâ'*) of their specific activities. For example, the perfect state of the rational soul is to be always existent perceiving things as they really are, knowing them, and taking pleasure in this knowledge. The rational soul is delighted with knowledge, because knowledge, by virtue of itself, makes the rational soul perfect and brings it to its goal. Since the rational soul knows its beginning (*mabda'*) and its end (*ma'âd*), it longs



for its Creator as a lover longs for his beloved. But unlike any other lover who longs for his beloved, whoever loves God is given to a ceaseless longing, because each day he only reaches an additional measure of proximity to God, as the process is presumably endless due to God's infinite essence and attributes. This reason is not mentioned by the Brethren but can be easily assumed. We shall see that al-Ghazâlî expresses such an idea.<sup>95</sup> Meeting God is compared to seeing Him, but this seeing is neither connected with form nor with matter. The seer, the thing seen, and the means of seeing are all lights.<sup>96</sup> Very probably, because God appears in the 'the light verse' (Qur'ân 24.35)<sup>97</sup> as light, the Brethren use lights as metaphors for spiritual essences. We shall see later in al-Ghazâlî the connection between the love for God and seeing Him.

The highest goal of the existence of the inborn *'ishq* is to awaken man's soul from the slumber of negligence and folly and make the soul ascend from the material to the rational things, from the sensual to the spiritual entities which are its source. That is because all the beautiful things are only external phenomena, or more precisely, impressions which are formed by the Universal Soul in the Prime Matter.<sup>98</sup> The aim of these impressions or forms is to cause the human soul to long for the beautiful forms through looking at them, thinking about them, and examining their states, and finally reaching the essence of these forms, not their external appearance, so that when the bodies which are the substrate of these forms are absent from sight, these beloved forms remain in the soul united with it. Thus beyond the external beauty of forms, there is the internal beauty, the spiritual form of beauty. According to the Brethren, internal beauty never disappears. What is really beloved are the characteristics of the beloved which are imprinted in the lover's essence, hence they always exist and do not change.<sup>99</sup>

Concerning the attitude toward beautiful things, the Brethren make distinction between the élite (*al-khâṣṣa*) and the common people (*al-'amma*). When seeing a beautiful thing or a handsome person, the common people long to look at and come close to it, whereas the élite, namely wise people or philosophers (*ḥukamâ'*), long for its wise producer trying to imitate him in their acts. Also, the common people, characterized by imperfect souls, love only the external aspect of life in this world, whereas the élite not only despise this world but also become ascetic and wish the world beyond. Sharing the characteristics of the angels, the members of the élite desire to ascend to the kingdom of heaven which is possible only after the soul leaves the body. Moreover, the souls of the wise people seek in their acts, knowledge, and virtues to imitate the Universal Soul and thereby to join it. In like manner, the Universal Soul imitates the Creator in its perception of the celestial spheres, in its setting the stars in motion, and in its producing of beings. All its acts are motivated by its love for the Creator. Each member in the hierarchy of beings aspires to possess the virtues which exist in the echelon above it, and these virtues are given to each member through the process of emanation, or the overflow (*fayḍ*) which derives from God and descends to the Universal Intellect and so on. God is the First Beloved (*al-ma'shûq al-awwal*), because all existents long for Him, and because He is the source of them and the reason of their continuation and perfection. There is no doubt that the motif of *eros*, in its Neoplatonic form, plays a decisive role here.<sup>100</sup>

Ibn Sînâ's *Risâla fî'l-'ishq* is a more elaborate philosophical treatise than the epistle of the Brethren. In its broad lines it follows the basic idea of the Brethren, which originates in Neoplatonism, that love is the basic principle of beings, whether animate or inanimate.<sup>101</sup> Ibn Sînâ's discussion is built on several premises: a. All existents, with



the exception of God, are governed; b. Each existent strives, due to natural disposition, toward its perfection; c. This perfection is given to it by the Pure Good (*al-khayr al-mahd*); d. Each existent tries to avoid and to get rid of its imperfection; e. This imperfection is identical with evil; and f. All evil derives from matter and nonexistence. From these premises Ibn Sînâ draws the conclusion that each existent has innate love (*'ishq*) which is the cause of its existence.<sup>102</sup> He defines *'ishq* as the consideration of something as good and suitable. Each existent loves what is suitable for itself in particular and what is suitable for all existents in general. Hence, in as much as goodness increases, love increases. Since God is the supreme good, He is the highest object of love.<sup>103</sup>

Love subsists in simple inanimate existents. This group is divided into three parts: a. real matter (*al-hayûlâ al-ḥaqîqiyya*); b. a kind of form which cannot exist in separation (*al-ṣûra allatî lâ yumkinu lahâ al-qiwâm bi'l-infirâd bi-dhâtihâ*); and c. accidents (*a'râd*). The difference between *b* and *c* is that *b* is a kind of form which constitutes an essential part of the substances which exist by virtue of themselves, and hence it is regarded as substance, whereas an accident is not a constituent of the substance. Now, each of the simple existents has an inborn disposition of love inseparable from it which is the cause of their existence. Real matter longs for the form when the latter is absent, and when it exists, real matter loves it. When a form becomes nonexistent, real matter hurries to replace it by another form, being careful not to remain in a state of absolute nonexistence (*al-'adam al-muṭlaq*), because all existents shy away from absolute nonexistence. The form with which we are concerned attaches to its subject (*mawḍû'*) and rejects what would interfere with its attachment. Moreover, it adheres to its perfections and natural places when it is in them, and when it is separated from them, it longs for them. As for accidents, their love

is also expressed through their adherence to their subjects.<sup>104</sup>

In the third chapter of his epistle Ibn Sînâ discusses the existence of love in the vegetative souls. This kind of soul has three parts: a. the nutritive faculty; b. the faculty of growth; and c. the faculty of procreation. Each faculty strives to achieve its aim according to its function. The *'ishq* existing in the nutritive faculty is the source of its longing for (*shawq*) the presence of food when the matter needs it, and for its maintenance in the body. The faculty of growth longs for increase in food in accordance with the measures of the nourished body. And the faculty of procreation longs to produce a being like the source of its existence.<sup>105</sup>

Likewise, the activity of the animal soul including all its faculties is motivated by the existence of an inborn *'ishq*. Just as these faculties have natural desire whose source is an inborn love, so they have natural aversion whose source is an inborn detestation. The absence of both desire and aversion would mean the needlessness of these faculties. For example, the external senses guard man against things which harm him, by not approaching things that are dangerous or threatening to his body. The anger faculty causes man to shy away from weakness and humiliation, because of a desire for revenge and mastery. As for the appetitive part of the soul (*al-juz' al-shahwânî*), love in it is divided into two parts: a. natural love (*'ishq ṭabî'î*) which, for example, causes the nutritive faculty to act continuously so long as there is no hindrance that prevents it from acting; and b. voluntary love (*'ishq ikhtiyârî*) whose possessor may abstain from his object of love, if there is a possibility of being damaged by the object.<sup>106</sup>

When Ibn Sînâ comes to explain the love of the noble-minded and youth for external beauty, he precedes his explanation by four premises. At first he states that when each higher faculty of the soul is joined with a lower faculty, the latter acquires refinement which it does not



have before, when it acts separately. Thus the rational faculty improves and refines the actions of the animal faculty. This is the second premise in Ibn Sînâ's presentation, but it is only an example of the first one. According to the third premise, there is a hierarchy of good things or things which one desires. Sometimes a thing is good for a purpose, but when considering it with regard to a higher purpose it is vice. A medicine may be good for curing a little disease, but may cause a great damage to the whole body. The fourth premise states that both the rational soul and the animal soul – the latter on account of its nearness to the former – always love beautiful order, composition, and hierarchy, such as harmonious sounds, and harmonious tastes composed of various kinds of food. But, whereas the source of the animal soul's activity is inborn disposition, the source of the rational soul's activity is its knowledge of high conceptions which one cannot perceive by nature. The soul 'recognizes that the closer a thing is to the First Object of love, the more steadfast it is in its order, and the more beautiful in its harmony, and that what follows It immediately attains a greater degree of unity and of such qualities as result therefrom, *viz.*, harmony and agreement, whereas, on the contrary, the more remote a thing is from It, the nearer it is to multiplicity and such characters as follow it, *viz.*, contrast and disharmony.'<sup>107</sup> Consequently, Ibn Sînâ makes a distinction between whoever loves beautiful forms due to animal delight and whoever loves them due to rational considerations. The latter is better than the former because, through rational considerations he comes close to the influence of the First object of love. In most cases whoever possesses harmonious form, which derives from harmonious nature and divine impression, has also excellent virtues.<sup>108</sup> This is an echo of the Platonic notion of the identification of the beautiful with the good.<sup>109</sup>

The sixth chapter of Ibn Sînâ's epistle, 'On the love of the

divine souls' is the core of his work. On account of sensual or rational perception, the soul loves what benefits it and what causes some advantage to it. Thus animals love food, because food benefits their specific existence (*khâṣṣ al-wujûd*).<sup>110</sup> Likewise, whoever finds that coming close to and being assimilated with a being increases his excellence, will love this being by his nature.<sup>111</sup> Hence, if one knows the source of all existents, namely the First Cause, the Pure Good, he will love him. Ibn Sînâ identifies existence with goodness, and perfection of existence with perfection of goodness, therefore the First Cause which is the Necessarily Existent by virtue of itself, is the Pure Good.<sup>112</sup> The First Cause is the cause of all existents, their continuance in existence, and their longing for their perfections. Since whoever perceives good loves it, the divine souls love the First Cause. The perfections of angelic and human souls lie in two activities: a. the knowledge of the intelligibles as they really are with the aim of imitation of the essence of the Absolute Good;<sup>113</sup> and b. carrying out of righteous acts. The aim of the assimilation to the Absolute Good is to come close to It, for from this proximity perfection results. And each existent loves the object toward which it moves. In fine, each existent has an innate love for its perfection, namely the good that fits it, and since its perfection originates in the First Cause, it loves the First Cause, although it does not receive its perfection directly from the First Cause but through mediators.<sup>114</sup>

#### *d. Mysticism*

Each theory of divine love can be classified as a form of mysticism, for each theory teaches how to come close to God or to be united with Him. For the purpose of introducing the teachings of both al-Ghazâlî and



al-Dabbâgh, whether Ibn Sînâ's mystical theory is viewed as non-religious mysticism, as Morewedge sees his mysticism,<sup>115</sup> or as religious mysticism, if we accept the view that there is no mysticism outside the religious context,<sup>116</sup> is irrelevant. For whatever teachings al-Ghazâlî and al-Dabbâgh received from their predecessors, they combined these into religious mystical theory. Another question which is relevant to our discussion is the measure of the Neoplatonic influence on Islamic mysticism. Can we, in our discussion of divine love, accept Morewedge's view that although Neoplatonism is very close to Şûfîsm in that some general Neoplatonic doctrines, like the doctrine of emanation, occur often in the teachings of the Şûfîs, Neoplatonism cannot be regarded as the theoretical basis of Islamic mystical thought? Indeed, the Şûfîc doctrine of the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujûd*), an absolute kind of monism, contradicts the dualistic ontology of Neoplatonism in which the One is separate from the world, being a transcendent entity which has no connection to human beings. Morewedge states: 'It follows from our findings that contemporary scholarship of şûfîsm may safely proceed to deal with şûfîc texts directly. We question the necessity of reducing every aspect of the Islamic tradition to Greek thought . . . There is no doubt that Islamic intellectual thought grew through the rich nourishment it received from the Neoplatonic spirit in the same sense that Aristotle's philosophy flourished on a Platonic basis; in both cases, however, the similarity does not warrant a total reductionism.'<sup>117</sup> Şûfîsm was influenced by Greek, Christian<sup>118</sup> and Indian cultures, but not to such an extent as to lack any original characteristics. There is no doubt that Şûfîc statements and theories of love contribute novel perceptions of love. One cannot accept Zaehner's categorical statement that 'Muslim Mysticism is entirely derivative.'<sup>119</sup> However, although Morewedge is right in his general estimation, each issue should be examined

separately. I agree with his denial of total reductionism, but cannot escape the impression that Platonism and Neoplatonism play an important role in our subject matter.

Detailed and composite theories of Islamic mystic love have appeared only since the tenth/fourth century. Before then mainly utterances and poems on love are encountered. Partial theories exist, but only rarely. However, these already advance notions, such as the reasons of love for God, and the preparatory means to achieve love, which one finds later within complete theories of love. What characterizes almost all writers is the central place they assign to love for God in the mystical life.<sup>120</sup> It is impossible to be exhaustive in surveying such materials.<sup>121</sup> Therefore I will bring only the notions expressed by salient Şûfîc figures who are acknowledged to have influenced later generations. I think it is most appropriate to begin with Râbi'a al-'Adawiyya (d. 185/801), the most famous woman mystic in Islam.

Râbi'a is distinguished for her emphasizing some views which subsequently played an important role in the elaboration of the doctrine of divine love. As M. Smith writes 'Though Râbi'a was not the first among the Şûfîs to realize that the way to God must be sought through love, she was perhaps the first to lay stress upon the doctrine and to combine with it the doctrine of *Kashf*, the unveiling at the end of the way, of the Beloved to His lovers.'<sup>122</sup> We shall see later in al-Ghazâlî's writings that the culmination of the relationship between man and God is man's seeing God.<sup>123</sup> Râbi'a was also among the first to hold the doctrine of disinterested love for God which expresses itself in carrying out God's will. This idea was a novelty to many Şûfîs who generally served God for the purpose of gaining reward or of abstaining from punishment in the world to come.<sup>124</sup> That man should be satisfied with what God decrees for him, be it a good or evil decree, is another



element of love which appears in Râbi'a's teaching and which later Şûfîs elaborate on.<sup>125</sup> Love for God, she is quoted as saying, is all absorbing; it leaves no room for other love and not even for hatred. Asked if she saw Satan as an enemy, she replied in the negative arguing that her love for God occupied all her attention so that there was no place for other feelings.<sup>126</sup> To reach such a stage, man must sever his bonds with this world,<sup>127</sup> leaving the material things for the sake of ascending to the spiritual domain in which God is revealed in His perfect beauty.<sup>128</sup> With respect to Râbi'a there is an important point the reader must bear in mind; all we say about her is what later Şûfîs attribute to her. We cannot be sure that these were her own notions. However, it is not our aim to inquire into the historicity of Râbi'a's statements. Nevertheless, for the sake of our introduction, we can say that even if her reputed ideas were not entirely her own, these attributions may reflect the teachings of the early Şûfîs.

Shaqîq of Balkh (d. 194/810), a contemporary of Râbi'a, seems to have been the first who established the love for God as the highest station of the mystic.<sup>129</sup> In his *Âdâb al-ibâdât*, one of the earliest extant Şûfîc texts, he divides the stations of the mystics into four parts: a. abstinence (*zuhd*); b. fear (*khawf*); c. longing for Paradise (*shawq ilâ al-janna*); and 4. love, which is the highest station. It is God who causes man to love Him. However, only the one who wants to love God, does He enable him to do so. Also Shaqîq points out that when a man reaches the highest station of divine love, he still remains in the three other stations. All the four stations are compared to sources of light, stars (abstinence and fear), the moon (longing for Paradise), and the sun (love for God). While the light of the sun blots out other sources of light, it does not cancel them, in other words, while the love for God overcomes a man, it does not cancel his abstinence, fear of God, and longing for Paradise.<sup>130</sup> Ernst rightly observes that 'in this

classification, the term longing (*shawq*) is here reserved for longing for paradise, while in later discussions of love it is another mode of the soul's desire for God. It seems that the early Sufis' concern with establishing the primacy of the love of God succeeded in excluding the desire for paradise as a legitimate goal of mysticism; henceforth, longing can only be directed toward God.'<sup>131</sup>

One of the first Şûfîs who created a synthesis between the religious ordinances and mysticism and who, on some significant points, influenced al-Ghazâlî,<sup>132</sup> is al-Hârith ibn Asad al-Muḥâsibî (d. 243/857). He reportedly held that the beginning of love for God is obedience to Him (*awwal al-maḥabba al-ṭâ'a*), which is the expression of the *nomos* motif. However in what is reminiscent of the *agape* motif, al-Muḥâsibî states that this kind of love derives from God's love for man, for God makes people know Him and shows them how to obey Him, although He does not need them.<sup>133</sup> In his view, firm love for God means always remembering Him and His favors in the heart and mentioning them on the tongue, thus encouraging great intimacy (*uns*) with Him, and breaking off anything which separates man from Him.<sup>134</sup> He defines the love for God as intense longing (*shiddat al-shawq*) for Him.<sup>135</sup> True lovers, according to him, hope to endure the difficulties of life in this world and to see God in the world to come.<sup>136</sup> Again the seeing of God is mentioned in the context of love for God.

Dhû al-Nûn al-Miṣrî (d. 245/859), a contemporary of al-Muḥâsibî, connects the love for God with beauty, a notion to be developed later by al-Dabbâgh. Asked about the state of the gnostics who become intimate with God (*ista'nasa*), he answered: 'He (the gnostic) likes (*ya'nasu*) every fair face (*wajh ṣabîḥ*), every beautiful form (*ṣûra malîḥa*), and every sweet fragrance (*râ'iḥa ṭayyiba*).'<sup>137</sup> When asked about love, he detailed the contents of love in a statement characteristic of early Şûfîsm: '(The meaning



of love is) to love what God loves, to hate what God hates, to carry out all good actions, to reject what divert man from God, not to be afraid of one who condemns your behavior towards God, to be gentle to the believers and rough to the unbelievers, and to follow God's Messenger in matters of religion.' In short, love for God means obedience to Him.<sup>138</sup>

The most distinguished figure in early Ṣūfism is undoubtedly Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad al-Junayd (d. 298/910).<sup>139</sup> As Zaehner rightly states, Al-Junayd does not teach monism<sup>140</sup> but dualism of terrestrial and divine domains which he wants to bridge without infringement on God's transcendence and absolute unity. However, he does not hold absolute dualism, according to which there is no way to perceive God, but believes in gradual revelation of God to man. Like his Ṣūfī predecessors, his first premise is that love for God is the surest way for man's soul to perceive God. Man can perceive God when he becomes aware of his own divine essence, which, in al-Junayd's view is a divine idea. Man's soul has to return to its primordial state in order to be with God, a state which finds its expression in Qur'ān 7.172.<sup>141</sup> This condition is accomplished through the annihilation (*fanâ'*) of the material aspects of life, a gradual process, and participation in the divine. The goal of man is to isolate his soul from all material impediments and to live a divine life.<sup>142</sup> Like Plotinus he holds that when a man sees a beautiful thing, he longs for the spiritual world, wishing to reach it again.<sup>143</sup> Both living in a material world and in time, and separation from God are the sources of the soul's agony and suffering. These torments are not the outcome of God's hatred for man, but rather the result of His love. God wants man's soul to return to its source as it was before the creation of its body, that is, to a pure state.<sup>144</sup> Al-Junayd calls for preserving the religious laws and condemns those who hold that existing in a high spiritual state frees the Ṣūfī from

carrying out the precepts. On the contrary, fulfilling God's orders causes man to come close to Him.<sup>145</sup>

In some respects the views of al-Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj, who was executed in 310/922 for alleged heretical beliefs, are a continuation of the views on love of his master al-Junayd. Love for al-Ḥallāj is 'that you remain standing in front of your beloved, when you are deprived of your qualities and when the qualification comes from His qualification.' This kind of love made the lover, al-Ḥallāj, utter in moments of ecstasy the formula 'I am the Absolute Truth' (*anâ al-ḥaqq*) which to some theologians seemed to convey pantheism, the heresy of which al-Ḥallāj was accused. He was also accused of believing in incarnation (*ḥulûl*), a belief according to which the human and divine natures can be united.<sup>146</sup> In a long paragraph found in al-Daylamî's *Kitâb 'atf* (pp. 25-28), al-Ḥallāj, unlike some early philosophers who regard love as a created entity, states that love is God's essence. Al-Ḥallāj was followed in this idea by the Persian mystic Rûzbihân Baqlî (606/1209).<sup>147</sup> The source of this idea may go back to early Christianity. St. Gregory of Nyssa (d. c. 395 A.D.) states that the Godhead is Reason, Wisdom, Perfect Goodness, Truth, and Love, and that the life of the Supreme Being is Love.<sup>148</sup>

In the last quarter of the fourth/tenth century treatises on Ṣūfism characterized by orthodoxy appeared. Among these was *Kitâb al-luma' fi'l-tasawwuf* written by Abū Naṣr al-Sarrâj (378/988). This is a trustworthy exposition of Ṣūfī tenets by a Ṣūfī who attained a high rank in practical Ṣūfism.<sup>149</sup> The core of al-Sarrâj's discussion of divine love is his own tripartite division of this state which is corroborated by the statements of other Ṣūfīs: a. The love of the common people (*maḥabbat al-ʿamma*) derives from God's doing good to them and having compassion on them. It is an inborn disposition in man to love his benefactor. In this context, al-Sarrâj cites several Ṣūfī authorities who



have dealt with love. The first is Sumnûn ibn Ḥamza (d. after 287/900) nicknamed 'the Lover' (*al-muḥibb*) who, according to al-Hujwîrî, regards love as the basis of the way to God and superior to gnosis.<sup>150</sup> Asked what is divine love, Sumnûn answered that it is pure friendship (*ṣafâ' al-wudd*)<sup>151</sup> accompanied with continuous remembrance of God, for whoever loves something mentions it many times. This type of love is conditioned by such speech.<sup>152</sup> Sahl ibn 'Abdallâh al-Tustarî (d. 283/896) supplements remembrance of God with agreement and obedience to Him and to His messenger (the *nomos* motif), and the pleasantness of intimate conversation with God, meaning prayer.<sup>153</sup>

b. This is the state of the veracious and truthful people (*al-ṣâdiqîn wa'l-mutaḥaqqiqîn*) which originates in the heart's contemplation (*naẓar al-qalb*) of God's self-sufficiency, greatness, power, and knowledge. Thus one loves God because of His attributes, and not because of His acts for the sake of man. As a disinterested love it obliges man to uncover the secrets of God (*hatk al-astâr wa-kashf al-asrâr*) in order to know Him properly. This view is expressed by Abû al-Ḥusayn al-Nûrî (d. 295/907) 'who probably introduced the use of the word *'ishq*' into Ṣûfîsm.'<sup>154</sup> Likewise, Ibrâhîm al-Khawwâṣ (d. 295/904) states that love is effacement of one's will, attributes, and needs.<sup>155</sup> It seems to me that by this statement he means turning to God alone and thinking only about Him without paying attention to one's desires and without asking anything from Him.

c. The love of the righteous and gnostics (*al-ṣiddiqîn wa'l-'ârifîn*) which results from their knowledge of God's preexistent and uncaused love for them (*qadîm ḥubb allâh bi-lâ 'illa*). Consequently, also their love for Him is uncaused. One can discern here a Christian influence on the Ṣûfîc perception of divine love. We are reminded of the *agape* motif according to which God's love for man derives

from His eternal attribute of love which in turn causes man to love God without basing his love on personal reasons.<sup>156</sup> To describe this kind of love, al-Sarrâj brings forward Dhû al-Nûn al-Miṣrî's statement to the effect that pure love means the omission of love from the heart and the organs so that all things will be in God and for the sake of Him. Thus Dhû al-Nûn seems to say that man is not aware of the state of love, for he is so absorbed in contemplation of God. In the same vein, Abû Ya'qûb al-Sûsî (fl. at the second half of the 3/9 century) states that love is not true until one goes beyond seeing love and comes to seeing the beloved through the annihilation of the knowledge of love. This is an expression of passing away from one's self-awareness (*fanâ'*), a theme which later Ṣûfîs will elaborate on in the context of divine love. Al-Junayd explains that the essence of love is the replacement of the lover's attributes by the beloved's attributes so that all the lover's actions are carried out by the beloved's attributes; he sees through the beloved's eyes and so on.<sup>157</sup> The lover loses his identity and becomes identical to the beloved. Also here *fanâ'* is clearly expressed.

Another attempt to reconcile orthodoxy with Ṣûfîsm was made by Abû al-Qâsim al-Qushayrî (d. 465/1072) who was committed to the Ash'arite theology. In his *al-Risâla fî 'ilm al-taṣawwuf*, he expresses the theological view that we can ascribe to God not love but only will. His will can be interpreted to mean either punishment, or compassion, or love, according to the character of the object willed. If His will is connected with punishment, it is called anger. However, if it is connected with general favors, it is called compassion, and the connection to specific favors, such as benefaction, means love. Like other theologians, al-Qushayrî denies the ascription of the characteristics of human love to God. Thus God does not incline toward, or feel an intimate liking to individuals.<sup>158</sup> Al-Qushayrî sums up his view of man's love for God as follows: '*Maḥabba* is



a state which man feels in his heart, too delicate to be expressed in words.<sup>159</sup> This state causes man to recognize the greatness of God, to prefer to please Him, to be unable to tolerate His absence, to be excited because of His presence, to find no rest without Him, and to experience intimacy in the heart by continuous remembrance of Him. Man's love for God does not imply inclination and perfect perception (*ikhṭiṭât*)<sup>160</sup> . . . for God is exalted above all attainment, perception, and comprehension. It is more appropriate to describe the lover of God as annihilated in the Beloved than to describe him as perfectly knowing the Beloved.<sup>161</sup> The rest of al-Qushayrî's chapter on love constitutes an anthology of Ṣūfîc statements on love some of which we have already seen. These include love as obedience, love as absolute devotion to the beloved, love as annihilation of one's self and the reception of the beloved's identity. There is no coherent theory in al-Qushayrî's presentation, but we can discern an inclination toward regarding love as a station which changes man's self in such a way that he loses his own dispositions and takes on the spiritual constitution of his beloved. In this regard, it seems that he was influenced by the teaching of al-Junayd. Also in his definition and description of *shawq* (longing for), he does not deviate from his predecessors.<sup>162</sup>

Another work of moderate Ṣūfîsm is Abû Ṭâlib al-Makkî's (d. 386/996) *Qût al-qulûb* (The Food of the Hearts) which influenced al-Ghazâlî to a great extent. Al-Makkî considers love for God one of the highest stations (*maqâmât*) of the gnostics.<sup>163</sup> It is a favor bestowed initially by God on his sincere servants, and this favor causes them to love God. This is not love in the meaning of *agape*, God's spontaneous love, for al-Makkî clearly points out that God loves the pure people and those who repent, but not all the people, among them the evil-doers. His view is reminiscent of the Biblical view. It is

worth noting that love as God's favor is inconsistent with Muḥammad's ordinance to love God,<sup>164</sup> for ordinance connotes man's endeavors, whereas favor connotes gift. Al-Makkî fails to reconcile different, inconsistent, and sometimes contradicting traditions on love. According to al-Makkî, each believer in God loves Him, and the measure of the believer's love depends on the degree of his belief. Basing himself on Qur'ân 2.165 'Those that believe love God more ardently,'<sup>165</sup> he concludes that as belief increases, love increases; that is, love has different ranks the highest of which applies to those who imitate God's attributes, such as knowledge, compassion, tolerance and so on.<sup>166</sup> However, he does not define clearly what he means by belief,<sup>167</sup> and moreover, elsewhere he seems to contradict himself when stating that belief is conditioned by love meaning that one cannot believe in God unless one loves Him.<sup>168</sup>

Al-Makkî devotes much space to the signs of love for God. To mention (*dhikr*)<sup>169</sup> God many times especially at night, to wish to meet (*liqâ'*) Him even if the encounter involves death, to love His speech (*kalâm allâh*, that is the Qur'ân), to make excessive efforts to satisfy His will, to practice the ascetic way of life (*zuhd*), to think about His favors, to patiently endure His trials (*ṣabr*), to be content with His decrees (*riḍâ*) are all signs of love. But the most distinguished sign is the preference of God to any other thing, that is, one loves God more than one loves anything else, thus overcoming all human desires.<sup>170</sup>

Al-Makkî also stresses the idea, which we have seen in Rabbinical Judaism, that worship of God out of love is better than worship because of fear. A certain 'Alî ibn al-Muwaffaq is said to have seen in a dream Ma'rûf al-Karkhî<sup>171</sup> looking at God. He was told that God let al-Karkhî look at Him till the Day of Resurrection for 'he worshipped Him not out of fear of Hell, and not out of longing for Paradise, but out of love for Him.'<sup>172</sup>



To sum up, al-Makkî's chapter on divine love is still, like al-Qushayrî's, a work of compilation; there is no attempt to develop a theory of love out of the various materials, although the chapter includes basic ideas which we shall find in later Sûfî works.

The first book on divine love extant nowadays, *kitâb 'atf al-alif al-ma'lûf 'alâ al-lâm al-ma'tûf*, was written by the Sûfî Abû al-Hasan 'Alî ibn Muḥammad al-Daylamî (fl. late fourth/tenth century). This work consists of an anthology of the views of philosophers, theologians, mystics, and the author's own contribution on divine love. What concerns us here is mainly the ideas of al-Daylamî and the Sûfîs on love.<sup>173</sup> Some references to the notions of other authors and groups will be brought in the discussion on al-Ghazâlî and al-Dabbâgh.

Al-Daylamî divides love into five kinds according to the kinds of lovers. Thus the hierarchy of lovers begins at the lowest level with animal kind (*naw' bahîmî*) of love associated with base people. This love seems to be sensual love. Above it stands the natural kind of love (*naw' tabî'î*), that of the commoners. No distinction is made between the last two kinds. We can only assume that animal love involves only the senses and sexual desire, whereas natural love contains emotional elements. The élite, the third rank, have a spiritual kind (*naw' rūḥânî*) of love, and the gnostics (*ahl al-ma'rifa*), the fourth rank, have a rational kind (*naw' 'aqlî*) of love. In the fifth, the highest rank, al-Daylamî places the people of unity (*ahl al-tawḥîd*) as having a divine kind of love (*naw' ilâhî*). Also here the essence of each of the three last ranks is not explained nor the differences between them.<sup>174</sup>

When treating the cause of love our author becomes more informative. According to him, God revealed to this world an idea, or a form (*ma'nâ*) called beauty (*ḥusn*) and attached this idea to a particular thing and called the latter beautiful (*ḥasan*). Then God willed to reveal things which

would face the beauty and the beautiful in order to make his secret manifest. Therefore He revealed whoever finds a thing beautiful (*al-mustaḥsin*), and He called his act, namely, finding something beautiful (*istiḥsân*), love, and the agent of this act, lover.<sup>175</sup> The thing that is found beautiful (*al-mustaḥsan*) is called the beloved. According to Qur'ân verses and traditions cited by al-Daylamî, it is evident that he follows Plato in identifying the good with the beautiful. Platonic and Neoplatonic is also the view that beautiful things derive their beauty from the universal beauty (*al-ḥusn al-kullî*).<sup>176</sup> The notion expressed by al-Daylamî that universal beauty is located near God may be a conclusion derived by the author from the Neoplatonic doctrine of emanation according to which the more a substrate is nearer to the One the more it is spiritual. Obviously, local presence is irrelevant to a spiritual entity.<sup>177</sup> The measure of beauty is established according to the measure of nearness to the universal beauty. The indication of the proximity of a thing to the universal beauty is the measure of its delicacy; the more a thing is delicate, the more it is beautiful. For example, the eye is the most delicate organ, hence it is the most beautiful, it is the most receptive of beauty, and the acts of spirit are most manifest in it. With regard to the criterion of nearness to God, the intellect is the most beautiful thing, for it is the nearest to God, and it takes its beauty from the latter's source without a mediator.<sup>178</sup>

Like other Sûfî thinkers, al-Daylamî deems the natural love, namely human love,<sup>179</sup> the basis from which the people of stations (*ahl al-maḳâmât*) ascend to divine love. He points out that a man is qualified for natural love when his soul is pure and delicate. Ascension to the divine love means the search for the perfection of the soul which is equivalent to reaching its source. This kind of soul finds its rest only after meeting God, for the rest of each thing lies in its completion (*râḥat kull shay 'inda tamâmihi*), and the



completion of the believer is attained through conjunction (*ittiṣāl*)<sup>180</sup> with God.

Our author states that the source of love lies in God, for He has a permanent attribute (*ṣifa qâ'ima*) of love; God loves Himself because of Himself (or for Himself) and by Himself (*aḥabba nafsahu li-nafsihi bi-nafsihi*). Thus God's love for Himself<sup>181</sup> means that love, lover and beloved are one entity. Just as other attributes of God, such as compassion and power, passed to human beings, meaning that He implanted these attributes in people, also love passed, but it was the first attribute implanted in man. Love is depicted by al-Daylamî as a luminous entity (*ma'nān nûrāniyy*) which came into being and was divided into three parts: lover, beloved, and love. When asked how one entity can be three, he answers by referring to the letter *alif*, the basis of all letters, whose name is composed of three letters, namely *alif*, *lām*, and *fā'*. Alternatively, the first letter can be regarded as the sum of 'lover', 'beloved', and 'love', by changing the pronunciation of *alif*, *lām*, and *fā'*. In the verb form it can be pronounced *alifa*, meaning 'he loved' (*aḥabba*), and hence it designates the 'lover'. As a noun *ilf* it means 'a beloved'. Now, the verb *allafa* (lit. he combined between) denotes God's act between them which is love. Also concerning numbers, al-Daylamî shows that *alf*, a unit, is composed of three parts, namely, ones, tens, and hundreds.<sup>182</sup> That love derives from God as a light is mentioned by al-Dabbâgh, but neither he nor al-Ghazâlî use letters or numbers to demonstrate the unified feature of love.

In the fourth chapter, al-Daylamî further elaborates on the subject of love as a luminous entity which derives from God's attribute of love through emanation and descends to the Intellect and then to the world of spirit (*rûḥ*) which in turn causes love to reach the world of nature (*âlam al-ṭabî'a*). In its descent love changes to some degree whenever it reaches each lower level; it gradually loses its

purity. So when nature brings love to composed bodies, the latter's purity is mingled with the bodies' turbidity. Light is now mixed with darkness, thus a third thing is created which is neither pure light nor pure darkness. This explains why love in human beings is expressed in different and contradictory states, such as nearness and remoteness.<sup>183</sup> Elsewhere al-Daylamî makes a distinction between praiseworthy love (*maḥabba maḥmûda*) and blameworthy love (*maḥabba madhmûma*). The former category is love which remains in its purity, its luminousness, its early spirituality, while the latter is love which is mingled with animal passions.<sup>184</sup> It seems to me that al-Daylamî developed for the first time in Islam a theory of divine love based on Platonic and Neoplatonic ideas.

Although the basic aim of this survey is to bring forward al-Daylamî's views on divine love, it is worth noting that he turns our attention to Ṣûfîc works no longer extant. Such a work is Abû Sa'îd Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-A'râbî's (d. 340/952) *Ikhtilâf al-nâs fî'l-maḥabba* from which al-Daylamî learns that people were divided into seven groups with regard to the essence of love, those who held that: 1. Love is obedience; 2. Love is passionate feeling; 3. Love is seeing; 4. Love is knowledge; 5. Love is a natural thing; 6. Love is will; and 7. Love is a mixture. Each group is divided into sub-groups. For example, in the first group there are those who hold that love is obedience to God and making efforts for the sake of Him, and those who believe that love means thanking God for His favors.<sup>185</sup>

A compilation of early Ṣûfîc views on love for God accompanied with many poems and stories is a later work (*Lawâmi' anwâr al-qulûb*) composed by Abû al-Ma'âlî 'Azîzî ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-Jîlî al-Baghdâdî (d. 494/1100), a Shâfi'ite judge and preacher known as al-Shaydhala.<sup>186</sup> Although his principal theme is divine love, the author sometimes uses illustrative examples from profane love.



The real meaning of love is frequently stated as obedience and total submission to God,<sup>187</sup> and as absolute devotion to Him in such a manner that love to anything other than God is considered idolatry (*shirk*).<sup>188</sup> 'Man has to prefer the Beloved to anything else and to leave everything except the Beloved' (*îthâr al-maḥbûb 'alâ al-kull wa-tark al-kull illâ al-maḥbûb*).<sup>189</sup> Hence, one of the truest signs of love is the continuance of the remembrance of God.<sup>190</sup> Also love means to feel intimacy (*uns*) and to rejoice (*surûr*) with the Beloved alone.<sup>191</sup> God's love for man is a perpetual favor which causes man to love God.<sup>192</sup> Passing away from one's consciousness (*fanâ*) occupies relatively a very marginal place.<sup>193</sup> On the basis of Qur'ânic verses, the author counts ten conditions for man's love for God (*shurûṭ al-maḥabba*), such as repentance, purity, prayer, justice, forbearance, without giving any rationale for his list and its hierarchy.<sup>194</sup> Strangely enough in the list of the ten principal elements of love (*arkân al-maḥabba*), he again mentions piety (*taqwâ*) and forbearance (*ṣabr*) which appear in the list of the conditions.<sup>195</sup> Another inaccuracy occurs at the end of the book in which al-Shaydhala enumerates ten degrees (*marâtib*) of love, each containing three stations (*manâzil*) and love occupies the eighth degree. Even the last portion of this book (fols. 176a-222b), which seems to be imprinted by the author's personal touch more than other portions, does not supply us with the beginning of a theory of divine love.

The aim of the preceding survey as we mentioned at the outset is to give sufficient background to the teachings of both al-Ghazâlî and al-Dabbâgh. In the light of what has been stated and the references which will be adduced in the following analysis, we can suggest the possibility that the Greek philosophical tradition both directly, through translations of philosophical writings into Arabic, or indirectly, through Muslim philosophers or Christian mystics<sup>196</sup> and philosophers, plays an important role in the

formulation of Muslim mystical thought on sacred love. We can scarcely point to a significant Jewish influence on Muslim mystical thought concerning this topic. I have not entered into the moot question of the possibility of Indian influence on Muslim mysticism,<sup>197</sup> because this would require a separate lengthy discussion for which we have no space here. In Zaehner's view, some great early Muslim mystics, such as Abû Yazîd al-Bisṭâmî, adopted Indian ideas on divine love.<sup>198</sup> Anyhow, we should always bear in mind that thinkers might have developed their ideas and theories quite independently, though these may be found in other cultures.



## II

# AL-GHAZÂLÎ'S THEORY OF DIVINE LOVE IN KITÂB AL-MAḤABBA<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Introduction

Al-Ghazâlî discussed divine love in several writings,<sup>2</sup> but the full exposition of his ideas concerning divine love occurs in *Kitâb al-maḥabba* in the *Iḥyâ'*. Therefore the following inquiry will describe and analyze this book. In the opening section of this book, after the laudatory paragraph, al-Ghazâlî expresses the view, known from earlier sources,<sup>3</sup> that the love for God (*al-maḥabba*) is the ultimate goal of all stations (*al-ghâya al-quṣwâ min al-maqâmât*), the rest of the stations, being either preliminaries to love for God [repentance (*tawba*), forbearance (*ṣabr*) and asceticism (*zuhd*)], or its results [longing (*shawq*), intimacy (*uns*), and contentment (*riḍâ*)].<sup>4</sup> Contrary to other stations, whose occasional rarity does not cause one to disbelieve in the possibility of their existence, belief in love for God is rare to such an extent that some theologians deny the possibility of its existence claiming that divine love has meaning only as devotion to the obedience of God.<sup>5</sup> According to them, the real meaning of love for God is conceivable only when used metaphorically. Consequently, says al-Ghazâlî, they also cancel the stations which result from love for God. Therefore he feels himself obliged to uncover the true meaning of this love.<sup>6</sup>

As a rule, al-Ghazâlî begins his discussions on the stations with citations of religious pieces of evidence.

Against the deniers of sacred love, he states that the Muslim community agrees unanimously (*mujmi'a*) that the love for God and His messenger is an obligation (*fard*).<sup>7</sup> Hence, how can God oblige people to carry out what does not exist? Moreover, how can one interpret love to mean obedience, while obedience follows love?<sup>8</sup> The Qur'ân (5.54) attests to the existence of love: '... God will assuredly bring a people He loves, and who love Him ...' Another verse (2.165) teaches not only the existence of love, but also its different ranks: '... But those that believe love God more ardently ...'<sup>9</sup> Al-Ghazâlî is satisfied with citing only two verses, and he does not develop a discussion beyond his statement that these two verses prove both the existence of love for God and its various degrees. In addition he cites traditions according to which this love is a prerequisite for belief in God,<sup>10</sup> an obligation imposed by the Prophet, a cause of meeting God in the afterlife, and a cause of happiness. A few statements of Jesus and some Ṣūfîs stressing the value of love for God follow.<sup>11</sup> It seems that al-Ghazâlî does not ascribe much significance to these traditions and statements – for him these are only a kind of formal introduction – for they are a plain thing (*amr ṣâhir*). Moreover, these do not even serve as points of departure for further discussion. Because the real meaning of love is hidden, the core of his presentation is to find it (*taḥqîq*).<sup>12</sup> However, in the course of his discussion he sometimes cites traditions as corroboration for his arguments.

## 2. Definition, principles and causes of love

The second chapter entitled 'The explanation of the real meaning (*ḥaqîqa*) of love, its causes and finding the real meaning of man's love for God' reveals al-Ghazâlî's basic plan, that is, to explain first the real meaning of love, its conditions and causes, and then to investigate the real



meaning of love when applies to God. Al-Ghazâlî brings forward three basic principles for understanding love:

a. Love is preceded by knowledge (*ma'rifa*)<sup>13</sup> and perception (*idrâk*).<sup>14</sup> Consequently, and contrary to Ibn Sînâ, love is characteristic of only animate beings which can perceive.<sup>15</sup> The objects one perceives are either consistent with one's nature and give one pleasure, or incompatible with one's nature and cause one pain. There are also objects which neither give pleasure nor cause pain. When man perceives objects which give him pleasure, he loves them, and when he perceives objects which cause him pain, he hates them. Objects which neither give pleasure, nor cause pain are neither beloved nor hated. Al-Ghazâlî defines love as the inclination of one's nature toward the object which gives pleasure (*mayl al-ṭab' ilâ al-shay' al-mulidhah*). When this inclination becomes strong it is called *'ishq* (passionate love).<sup>16</sup>

b. Since love follows knowledge and perception and perception is divided according to the object perceived (*mudrak*) – each sense perceives a kind of object and each kind of object gives a different kind of pleasure (the eyes' pleasure is to see beautiful things, and the ears' pleasure is to listen to good and rhythmically balanced sounds and so on) – there are various kinds of love according to the five senses. Hence, the source of love is internal, such as the senses, but it arises as a result of an external stimulus. Al-Ghazâlî emphasizes the role of pleasure; one loves something, because it gives him pleasure; one loves to see beautiful forms, to hear music<sup>17</sup> and so on. However, men and animals share the pleasures given by the five senses, and what particularizes the human being is the sixth sense called intellect (*'aql*), or light (*nûr*), or heart (*qalb*) or insight (*baṣîra bâṭina*).<sup>18</sup> The perception of this faculty is stronger than the perception of the five senses. For example, the intellect's perception is stronger than the

perception of the sense of seeing. And the things perceived by the intellect are more beautiful than those perceived by the senses. This is a statement al-Ghazâlî does not yet prove, except by a tradition in which the Prophet says that he was evoked to love three things in this world: perfume, women and prayer. But prayer caused him spiritual pleasure (*qurrat al-'ayn*), which al-Ghazâlî deems the greatest pleasure. This statement serves him only to assert that the intellect perceives divine things which cannot be perceived by the senses, and that only whoever restricts himself to the perception of the five senses may deny divine love, for God cannot be perceived by the senses.<sup>19</sup>

c. Al-Ghazâlî puts forward another inner element which helps us to understand the phenomenon of love. It is well known that a man loves himself and loves another person for the sake of himself. Now, al-Ghazâlî asks a rhetorical question: Is it conceivable that a man should love another person because of the latter's essence, and not for the sake of himself? Those who are feeble-minded think that a man loves another person, so long as he receives some benefit for himself from the other. Al-Ghazâlî does not agree with the denial of disinterested love; this kind of love is conceivable and existent. Here al-Ghazâlî begins to explain the causes of love and its deviation.

The essence (*dhât, nafs*) of every living being is its first object of love, which means that there is a natural inclination in man to the continuance of his existence (*dawâm al-wujûd*) and an aversion to his non-existence (*'adam*).<sup>20</sup> This is explained by the fact that naturally the object beloved is that which fits the lover, and there is nothing more fitting man than himself and the continuance of his existence. One loves the continuance of his existence and hates death and killing not only because of one's fear of what happens after death or one's wariness of the death agony, but because of one's hatred for non-existence. Non-existence, thus, is hated by virtue of itself, so that if a man



died without pains, he would not be content with his death. If a man suffered pains, he would prefer to die, not because of his love for death, but because in such a case death involves the disappearance of his pains. Also perfection is examined by al-Ghazâlî in terms of existence and non-existence. Just as the continuance of existence is beloved, so the perfection of existence is beloved (*kamâl al-wujûd*), because imperfection (*naqṣ*) means non-existence in relation (*bi'l-idâfa ilâ*)<sup>21</sup> to the thing which is absent. In other words, if part of a thing is non-existent, a thing is imperfect, and hence is not beloved. Moreover, love of perfection is, according to al-Ghazâlî, a natural disposition (*gharîza fi'l-tibâ'*) established by God as a law (*sunna*).<sup>22</sup>

Consequently, all the things which serve man's continuance of existence and perfection are also beloved. Thus one loves one's organs, property, children, family and friends, for the continuance of one's existence and perfection depend on them. A man loves his children, for after his death they continue his existence, which is a kind of continuance for his own existence (*naw' baqâ' lahu*). However, if he was given the choice of either he or his son being killed – in the case his nature is temperate – he would prefer his existence to his son's existence, for his son's existence is like his existence from one point of view, but it is not his real existence. Apart from being immoral,<sup>23</sup> this statement need not always reflect real human experience. A man may also find the perfection of his existence through his relatives and family, because they give him strength, and hence make his existence perfect.<sup>24</sup>

The second cause of love is doing good (*iḥsân*). Because of his natural disposition (*fiṭra*), a man loves whoever benefits him, even a stranger. Al-Ghazâlî cites a tradition which says: 'O God, do not make a libertine (*fâjir*) do me a favor so that I will love him,' as proof that the love for one who benefits a man is mandatory and cannot be rejected. In

his view, the second cause is a part of the first cause, for benefits by others cause one's existence to continue and be perfect. Seemingly trying to explain why he does not include the second cause under the first, al-Ghazâlî makes a distinction between what is beloved by virtue of itself, such as man's organs in which lies a man's perfection of existence, and the benefactor who serves only as a means to attain perfection, like a physician who maintains a man's health and a teacher who deepens a man's knowledge. Consequently, the benefactor is not beloved by virtue of himself, but because of his benefits, the absence of which will terminate the love for him. We should point out that from the point of view of man's continuance of existence and perfection as beloved by virtue of themselves, all other things are only a means to attain the goal. Hence, there is no justification for al-Ghazâlî to create a class of doing good as a second cause of love.<sup>25</sup> However, al-Ghazâlî has a right to single out *iḥsân* as a separate cause of love, for although doing good is a means for man's continuance of existence and perfection, it is a special kind of means; it is the action of a human being – contrary to inanimate objects such as property – who intends to do good for another, and his intention and activity make the receiver of the benefits love the benefactor.

The most discussed and analyzed cause of love is the third cause: This is the love for a thing by virtue of itself (*li-dhâtihi*), and not on account of being a means to attain an end. Al-Ghazâlî regards this kind of love as a true and profound form of love which is eternal. The love of beauty is adduced as an example. Beauty is beloved for its own sake, for in the perception of beauty lies the very essence of one's pleasure. And pleasure is beloved by virtue of itself, and not by virtue of another thing. Al-Ghazâlî rejects the view that looking at beautiful forms serves only the satisfaction of a desire; he distinguishes between two kinds of pleasures: a. the pleasure of looking at beautiful forms;



and b. the pleasure of satisfaction of a desire. For example, a man may look at running water and be delighted, and he may also use running water to quench his thirst. That one is delighted with beautiful lights, flowers, and birds is a natural phenomenon<sup>26</sup>. Al-Ghazâlî seems to consider the 'looking at' and the 'pleasure' as one phenomenon, otherwise it would be possible to argue that looking at beautiful things is the cause of pleasure which means that beautiful things are not beloved by virtue of themselves. Accordingly, though the statement that man's worries are driven away by looking at beautiful plants and that there is no goal beyond the 'looking at' may seem self-contradictory because it states that by 'looking at' worries are driven away, it does conform with al-Ghazâlî's view that the perception of beauty is identical with the very essence of pleasure. Contrary to the Epicureans who believe that pleasure is the principal good on which all morals are founded, the Stoics hold that moral values are sought for by virtue of themselves. Following the Stoics, al-Ghazâlî holds the view that it is possible to love beautiful things, whether sensual or spiritual, for their own sake, and not as a cause for another value.<sup>27</sup>

Al-Ghazâlî continues his discussion by explaining the meaning of beauty (*jamâl* or *ḥusn*).<sup>28</sup> For him beauty is not limited to the perception of sight, meaning that beauty is not only a symmetry of forms and a mingling of colors. Such characteristics apply to the external beauty of the human being. Whoever thinks that whatever is not perceived by the eyes and by the imagination and is not composed of forms and colors cannot be conceived as beautiful, thinks that what cannot be conceived as external beautiful does not bring about pleasure and hence cannot be beloved. According to al-Ghazâlî, whatever is perceived can be subsumed under the titles of either beautiful or ugly (*qabîḥ*). Consequently, he defines beauty in a way which applies to all objects of perception. Beauty means the

presence of perfections which are possible and befitting for a certain object. The existence of all possible perfections in a certain object means its being in the utmost degree of beauty (*ghâyat al-jamâl*). The preceding definition of beauty is general, whereas every class of objects has its specific definition of beauty which establishes the possible perfections of the class. For instance, a beautiful horse combines the perfections of form, color, and gait, and beautiful handwriting has the qualities of symmetry of letters and their appropriate arrangement.

Al-Ghazâlî's definition of beauty seems to be a combination of Stoic and Platonic notions. According to the Stoics, the beautiful or the good has by nature characteristics which befit it. And in Plato's view, one of the conditions of beauty is perfection.<sup>29</sup> Contrary to the Greek masses who held that the beautiful cannot be but good, Plato asserted that the good cannot be but beautiful. Al-Ghazâlî seems to follow Plato's line of thought when considering non-sensual objects, such as knowledge, good character, and virtues, as beautiful. All these objects are perceived by the light of the insight (*nûr al-baṣîra al-bâṭina*), a term equivalent in al-Ghazâlî to the intellect, and not by the senses. Spiritual qualities are beloved and the person qualified by them is by nature beloved by whoever knows his qualities. The proof for this is the fact that people by nature love prophets, the Companions of Muḥammad, the heads of the schools of law, such as al-Shâfi'î, although they did not see them. This love may sometimes reach the degree of excessive love (*'ishq*) which causes the lover to spend money, take pains, and even to sacrifice his life for the cause of the beloved imam or jurist. The origin of all virtues is knowledge (*'ilm*) through which man knows things as they really are, and power (*qudra*) through which man overcomes his desires.<sup>30</sup> To show again that these two faculties are not perceived by the senses, al-Ghazâlî brings forward the atomistic theory according



to which *'ilm* and *qudra* are accidents whose substrate (*maḥall*) is an atom (*juz' alladhî lâ yatajazza'*) in one's body, and an atom cannot be seen because it has no shape or color.

Al-Ghazâlî links the love for inner beauty perceived by the intellect with doing good. Since a man loves whoever has virtues, he will love anyone who does good, even if the latter's action is not for his sake. This kind of love is the fourth cause, although in principle it can be subsumed under the heading of love for beauty.<sup>31</sup>

The fifth cause of love is the hidden affinity (*munâsaba khafiyya*) between the lover and the beloved. Sometimes love exists between two persons which stems not from beauty or benefit, but from an affinity of their souls. As a corroboration he cites the following tradition: 'Spirits are regimented battalions: those which know one another (*ta'ârafa*) associate familiarity together, while those which do not know one another (*tanâkara*) remain at variance.'<sup>32</sup> Elsewhere al-Ghazâlî discusses affinity – according to him a mysterious matter – stressing the impossibility of finding its foundation. He quotes one of the scholars (*ba'd al-'ulamâ'*) as saying that God created the spirits and split some of them and made them circulate around the Throne (*al-'arsh*). If two halves of a split spirit meet and know one another in the upper world, they will be friends in this world.<sup>33</sup> This is probably related to the myth appearing in Plato's *Symposium* according to which love is explained as the longing of one half of the human being to the other.<sup>34</sup> It is also possible to trace it back to Plato's *Lysis* (214) in which he cites a poet's statement: 'God is ever drawing like towards like, and making them acquainted.'<sup>35</sup> However, stating that it is not with man's ability to know the causes of affinity,<sup>36</sup> al-Ghazâlî seems to have accepted neither the above explanation, nor the astrological explanation by which similarity in the stars' states causes affinity.<sup>37</sup>

The second chapter ends with recapitulating the causes of love: 1. Man's love for his existence and its continuance and perfection; 2. Man's love for whoever benefits him for the sake of the continuance of his existence and his perfection; 3. Man's love for whoever benefits people in general, even if the individual himself does not benefit from the benefactor; 4. Man's love for whatever is beautiful by virtue of itself, whether it has external or internal beauty; and 5. Affinity.<sup>38</sup> Al-Ghazâlî's recapitulation does not comply with the order of his presentation, for the third cause occurring above is man's love for something by virtue of itself. Anyhow, one can reduce the number to three general causes: 1. One's love for oneself which derives from the will for self preservation; 2. Love for something by virtue of itself; and 3. Affinity. Al-Ghazâlî clearly states that the foundation of the five causes is natural disposition. The present point has much relevance to the question of what causes man to love God: Is it God or man's own efforts. In the following section we shall discuss this issue. If the five causes of love are joined in one person, love is multiplied. A man will love very much a son who is handsome, has virtues, does good to others and to his father. The power of love depends on the power of the qualities existing in the object beloved; if these are in the highest degree of perfection, love will be in the highest degree.

### 3. The causes of the love for God

The discussion of the causes of love serves al-Ghazâlî as an introduction to his third chapter in which he proves that God alone deserves love (*al-mustaḥaqq li'l-maḥabba huwa allâh waḥdahu*). All the five causes of love are joined in God in a real sense and in other objects in a metaphorical sense. Al-Ghazâlî begins to explain the first cause of love, that is, man's love for his existence. Man's existence originates in



God and it is God's favor to man. From the point of view of man's essence, he has no existence; he neither exists nor continues to exist by virtue of himself, but by virtue of God.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, God also makes man's qualities perfect. Now, 'if the knower loves his essence and the existence of his essence stems from another, he necessarily will love whoever gives him existence and makes his existence continue,' in case he knows the latter as a creator, maker of subsistence, and existent by virtue of itself.<sup>40</sup> Al-Ghazâlî again emphasizes the importance of having knowledge in order to love; whoever does not know himself and his Lord, cannot love Him. The condition for such knowledge is rejecting the desires and the sensual objects.<sup>41</sup> When this is done, man's love for himself and hence for God becomes necessary. What al-Ghazâlî is actually saying is that if a man devotes himself to his desires, he will not be able to realize his real interest, namely his own existence. The rejection of desires necessarily makes him know his real aim and hence the real source of his existence.

Also the second cause of love necessitates the love for God alone, for true knowledge reveals that God benefits man in various innumerable ways. Here God appears as the mover of the world and the cause of all phenomena. Consequently, God gives the human benefactor motives to help someone; and this benefactor serves only as a device of God to benefit man. In al-Ghazâlî's thought as elaborated in *Kitâb al-tawakkul*, man's acts of choice are necessarily carried out due to motives (*dawâ'î*) which exist outside himself.<sup>42</sup> Besides, when a man benefits another, he is motivated to do this, because he has an aim of attaining reward either in the hereafter, or benefits in this world, such as prestige. Actually, the benefactor is doing good to himself and not to the person benefited, for he is seeking a compensation which exceeds his benefits. Therefore generosity (*jûd*) and doing good with reference to human

beings is either a lie or a metaphor. God alone deserves the quality of generosity.<sup>43</sup> The notion of God's generosity appears in Plato (*Timaeus*, 29-30) and Plotinus (*Enneads*, VI, 9.6). Aristotle says (*Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII, 6, 1158b, 1-5) that friendship built on utility is nothing but a mere exchange of pleasure for utility.<sup>44</sup> It seems to me that the second explanation of the apparent generosity of the human being contradicts the first explanation, for if God imposes motives on man, even though they may be considered selfish motives, these are not his own motives. The resolution of this contradiction seems to lie in al-Ghazâlî's speaking on two levels; on the first, the divine level, everything is decreed by God, so from this point of view we cannot ascribe any act to man. But at the second, the human level, man can know what his motives are, and from this point of view all man's acts are selfish. In like manner al-Ghazâlî explains man's determination of his acts; man does not freely choose his acts nor is he compelled to carry out acts, but he is compelled to choose his acts (*majbûr 'alâ al-ikhtiyâr*) which seems to mean that from the point of view of the cosmic system he is compelled to choose a definite way of action owing to external and internal causes. However, from the point of view of his awareness, he feels that he is free to choose his acts.<sup>45</sup>

The third cause of love, the love for a benefactor whose benefits do not reach the lover, also applies to God. The benefits God gives to all people and the graces He bestows on all creations necessitate love for Him. Moreover, this cause of love necessitates the love for other benefactors only because God causes them to be benefactors. God's graces on man are divided into four parts: 1. Bringing man into existence (*ijâd*);<sup>46</sup> 2. Making man perfect through creation of necessary organs, such as the head, the heart, and the liver, and through the provision of necessary means of subsistence, such as water and food; 3. Creation of



useful things in man's body, such as the eye, the hand, and the foot, and outside his body, such as medicines, meat, and fruit; 4. Creation in man's body of beautiful things which are neither necessary nor useful, such as the curve of the eyebrows, the redness of the lips, and the various colors of eyes, and outside man's body, such as the greenness of trees, and the beautiful forms of flowers. The three criteria of God's benefits mentioned above, namely, necessity, usefulness and beauty, are found in all kinds of creation, be they animal, or plants, or inanimate things, from their lowest being to the highest one. God is the real benefactor, for He creates benefits, benefactors, benefaction and the means of benefaction. Here also we can discern Stoic notions. Cicero speaks of the purposefulness of man's organs and generally of the design observed in all kinds of things,<sup>47</sup> and of parts of man's body which appear to be intended only for ornament.<sup>48</sup>

Now al-Ghazâlî turns to the fourth cause of love, the love for a beautiful thing by virtue of itself, and discusses at length its relevance to God as an object of love. As we have seen, beauty is divided into two parts: a. the beauty of the external form which is perceived by the faculty of sight; and b. the beauty of the internal form which is perceived by the intellect. The intellect appears in al-Ghazâlî as the eye of the heart (*'ayn al-qalb*) or the light of the insight (*nûr al-baṣîra*). Every kind of beauty, whether external or internal, is beloved by its perceiver. Therefore, man loves prophets, scholars and virtuous people, for they have internal beauty expressed in their good acts which stem from their excellent qualities. A good book testifies to the excellent qualities of its writer, and a good building testifies to the excellent qualities of its builder.<sup>49</sup> All man's virtues derive from knowledge (*'ilm*) and power (*qudra*), and the degrees of both one's knowledge of and power over a thing depend on the knowledge and power existing in the thing. In other words, whenever the object of knowledge is

more beautiful, for example, it contains many virtues, its knowledge is more beautiful, and whenever the object of power is more important, the power over it is more important. Does a man have power over God? Al-Ghazâlî seems to say that so long as a thing is powerful, one has to devote excessive efforts to know it. Since God, on account of His attributes, is the most exalted object of knowledge, the knowledge of God is the best knowledge. Likewise whatever is near to God and related to Him, its high rank is measured according to the relation to Him. In the light of the principles mentioned above, man's love for virtuous persons originates in three causes: a. their knowledge of God, His angels, books, messengers, and the laws of His prophets; thus they deal with the most excellent object of knowledge; b. their power to remedy their souls and the souls of other people through guidance; and c. their being free from vices and desires. Al-Ghazâlî's next step is to apply these three causes of love for virtuous persons, or these three qualities which constitute the inner beauty of righteous persons to God. God is omniscient and His knowledge is infinite. Man's knowledge in comparison to God's is exemplified by the following example: If all creatures in the heaven and earth joined together to know His wisdom regarding the details of His creation of an ant or a fly, they would not know one hundredth of His knowledge. Even man's scanty knowledge is caused by God. Moreover, the difference between God's knowledge and man's knowledge is far greater than the difference between the knowledge of the most knowing person and the knowledge of the most ignorant person. The reason is that the most knowing person exceeds the most ignorant in finite and enumerated objects of knowledge, which can be attained by the most ignorant through efforts, while God's objects of knowledge are infinite. Consequently, God as the Omniscient is most deserving of man's love.<sup>50</sup>

In like manner al-Ghazâlî treats the quality of power.



Power is perfection and inability (*'ajz*) is imperfection. Whoever is qualified by qualities which stem from power, such as courage or prevalence over others, is beloved by people. Now, man's power in relation to God's amounts to nothing, for even his limited power is created and given to him by God. As a result, God as omnipotent is most deserving of man's love.<sup>51</sup>

As al-Ghazâlî says, being free from defects and vices is one of the qualities which necessitates love. This quality, which explains man's love for prophets and righteous people, finds its perfection only in God. The fact that man is created and compelled to act indicates his very imperfection. Contrary to God, whose perfection is absolute (*muṭlaq*), the perfection of each created being is relative. Thus, man is perfect in relation to animals. Actually, when referring to created beings, al-Ghazâlî prefers to speak of imperfection, rather than perfection; created beings differ from each other only in relation to the levels of imperfection (*darajât al-nuqṣân*). Owing to God's oneness, eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, and perfection al-Ghazâlî calls Him 'the absolute beautiful' (*al-jamîl al-muṭlaq*). Thus al-Ghazâlî distinguishes between three kinds of beauty: a. physical beauty; b. abstract beauty (moral or spiritual); and c. divine beauty, or absolute beauty.<sup>52</sup> God's beauty as the cause of man's love for Him is stronger than the cause of God's benefaction, for benefaction increases and decreases, whereas God's beauty is a stable cause which does not change.<sup>53</sup>

Affinity, the fifth cause of love, is also divided into external and internal or hidden affinity. External affinity, which al-Ghazâlî does not mention above, depends on external form or quality. Experience shows that like seeks like; a carpenter will be acquainted with his fellow carpenter and not with a peasant. On the other hand, affinity may be hidden; sometimes two persons love each other without any visible cause. The two parts of affinity

apply to the relation between God and man. One loves God through imitation of His attributes of knowledge,<sup>54</sup> piety, compassion, and so on. This imitation draws the human being close to God; however, al-Ghazâlî immediately notes, it is not a closeness of place, but only of attributes, that is, man comes close to God through carrying out the same acts God carries out.<sup>55</sup> Al-Ghazâlî emphatically denies any form of man's substantial union with God which was advocated by extreme Ṣûfîs. For al-Ghazâlî God remains transcendent.

Contrary to the obvious affinity between God and man,<sup>56</sup> the hidden affinity is only alluded to in the Qur'ân and Tradition. The Qur'ân speaks of the spirit God gave to man. 'They will ask you about the spirit. Say: The spirit is from my Lord' (*min amr rabbî*) (Qur'ân 17.85). It seems to me that by the last phrase al-Ghazâlî intends 'from the essence of my Lord' (*min amr rabbî*), for he wants to prove that there is something common to God and man which inheres in both essentially but in different degrees. What corroborates this explanation is the second verse cited: 'When I have shaped him, and breathed My spirit in him' (Qur'ân 15.29 trans. Arberry) and the tradition: 'God created Adam in His image' (*ṣûra*).<sup>57</sup> Al-Ghazâlî understands *ṣûra* as inner form, but does not explain what this element, common to God and man, is. He only states that this kind of affinity is expressed in man's persistence in carrying out supererogatory works after mastering the precepts (*iḥkâm al-farâ'id*): 'When my servant constantly draws near to me by works of supererogation, then do I love him, and once I have started to love him, I become his eye by which he sees, his ear by which he hears, and his tongue by which he speaks.'<sup>58</sup> Thus, *nomos* is now connected with *eros*; the love for God means carrying out acts which attest to man's submission to God. Al-Ghazâlî warns of two dangers involved in this affinity: a. regarding the common form as something perceived by the senses,



hence believing in anthropomorphism (*tashbîh*); and b. understanding this affinity as unity between God and man in the form of God's incarnation in man. Al-Hallâj's statement 'I am the Lord' (*anâ al-ḥaqq*) and Christian views that Jesus is God, or that humanity (*nâsût*) is mixed with (*tadharra'a*) with divinity (*lâhût*), or that Jesus was united with God serve as examples of this phenomenon. Al-Ghazâlî notes that those to whom the impossibility of anthropomorphism as well as the impossibility of incarnation and unity are revealed are very few. They know the real secret of this affinity, which is the strongest cause of love.<sup>59</sup> Does al-Ghazâlî think that knowledge is the common element between God and man?<sup>60</sup> It seems to me that in the following chapter he alludes to this possibility.

In *Kitâb al-implâ' fî ishkâlât al-ihyâ'* (p. 38f), a book written by al-Ghazâlî as a rejoinder to criticisms leveled against some theses of the *Ihyâ'*, he regards this tradition as expressing the notion that man is a microcosm. Just as the world is divided into sensual and spiritual parts, so man has two parts: the sensual and the intellectual or spiritual. In *Mishkât al-anwâr* (p. 158f) he adds that man's being a microcosm derives from God's mercy, or exactly 'the presence of His mercy' (*ḥaḍrat al-raḥma*), and connects the present tradition with the tradition which states that 'whoever knows himself (or his soul) knows God' (*man 'arafa nafsahu arafa rabbahu*).<sup>61</sup> Since man is a microcosm, if he knows himself, meaning his physical aspects and his soul which governs these aspects, he will know the physical aspects of the world and God who governs the world. In an earlier passage of this treatise, the author states that man's intellect is a pattern (*unmûzag*) of God's light, which is God's intellect, and that the pattern resembles its original, but does not equal it.<sup>62</sup> There is no evidence that al-Ghazâlî thought even for a moment of an identity between God's intellect and man's, or of the merging of man's intellect

with God's.<sup>63</sup> Such an opinion cannot be accepted in the light of al-Ghazâlî's insistence on God's transcendence which occurs in the *Ihyâ'* as well as in other of his writings.

Finally, says al-Ghazâlî, all the causes of love apply really and not metaphorically to God, and when these apply to God they occupy the highest rank of intensity. Whereas intelligent people consider only the love for God reasonable and acceptable, the unintelligent people consider the love for anything except God reasonable and possible. The latter are wrong, for no entity can share with God the full content of the causes of love; no entity is perfect like Him or benefits others like He benefits. Hence He is more deserving love than any other being.<sup>64</sup>

#### 4. The way to love God

Whereas in the preceding chapter al-Ghazâlî proves that God is the most deserving object of love, in chapter four<sup>65</sup> he turns to discuss the way through which man loves this object. The explanation begins with the description of man's nature. Man has various natural dispositions (*gharîza* pl. *gharâ'iz*) which were created in him purposefully. For example, the purpose of the disposition of the desire to eat is to spur man to attain the food on which he lives. Pleasure (*ladhdha*) means to consume food, in other words to consume what is required to satisfy this disposition. In like manner, man's heart contains a disposition called 'the divine light' (*al-nûr al-ilâhî*),<sup>66</sup> or intellect (*'aql*), or insight (*baṣîra*), or the light of belief and certainty (*nûr al-îmân wa'l-yaqîn*).<sup>67</sup> At last, our author prefers to call this disposition intellect. However, he does not positively define this term, but only points out what the intellect perceives, namely, objects which are neither sensual nor imaginable, such as the creation of the world,



or its need for an eternal and wise creator who is qualified by divine attributes. Besides, the intellect is not a device by which one perceives the ways of dispute (*mujâdala*, *munâzzara*), although it became well known as such. Its goal is to know the real meanings of things (*ḥaqâ'iq al-umûr*). Consequently, when one attains this goal, one has pleasure. This is also proved through experience; a man is happy and proud when knowledge is ascribed to him, even if this is knowledge of despicable things, while when ignorance is ascribed to him, he is sad. He is aware that he attains perfection of his essence through knowledge, that is because knowledge is the most specific attribute of Godship (*akḥaṣṣ ṣifât al-rubûbiyya*) and the highest degree of perfection.

Al-Ghazâlî expresses here an Aristotelian notion: 'Aristotle regards the highest activity as being of a contemplative nature since this activity is akin to God's activity, and is therefore God-like.'<sup>68</sup> It seems to me that the fact that this notion directly follows the fifth cause of love (affinity) alludes to the possibility that al-Ghazâlî regards knowledge as the link which connects man to God. That knowledge plays an important role in al-Ghazâlî's conception of love will also be proved later.

Man's degree of pleasure follows the degree of knowledge, and the degree of knowledge depends on the degree of the object known. Inasmuch as the rank of the object known is greater, the pleasure is greater. Thus, the pleasure of knowing the states of a leader is far greater than the pleasure of knowing the states of a peasant. As a result, one's love for the object known, which stems from pleasure, increases in compliance with al-Ghazâlî's statement that love originates in pleasure.<sup>69</sup> Now, since the highest and the most sublime object known is God, who creates, perfects, and directs all things, the knowledge of the divine secrets and of the divine matters which encompass all existents is the highest and the most pleasant

knowledge. One should thus know that the pleasure of knowledge is stronger than any other kind of pleasure, be it a pleasure of desire, of senses and so on.<sup>70</sup>

The criterion for knowing which pleasure is preferable to man, whether external pleasure, such as the pleasure attained through the five senses, or internal pleasure, such as the pleasure of leadership or knowledge, is subjective; if a man is given the choice to look at a beautiful form or to smell perfume and he chooses to look at the beautiful form, this proves that this man prefers the pleasure of looking to the pleasure of smelling. Experience testifies that people of virtue and those whose intellect is perfect prefer internal pleasures to external ones. Also man's attitude toward different kinds of pleasure changes according to his age. Children take pleasure in games, young people detest games but take pleasure in dressing and riding on animals, then they have desire for women. Adults take pleasure in leadership and being proud, this pleasure being the highest pleasure of the present world. Only after that people take pleasure in the knowledge of God and His acts.<sup>71</sup> Al-Ghazâlî emphasizes that the highest pleasure is attained through knowledge of God, His attributes and acts, but a portion of this pleasure (al-Ghazâlî uses the words 'smell of this pleasure') is tasted by those who engage in knowledge of the sciences.<sup>72</sup> Here is a slight allusion that the scientist or the philosopher is the nearest person to the highest knowledge, the knowledge of God.

As we have seen al-Ghazâlî is not consistent in using technical terms. When speaking of the highest knowledge he employs intermittently the terms *'ilm* and *ma'rifa* which may denote *gnosis*, and the terms *kashf* (unveiling) and *dhawq* (spiritual 'taste' or intuition) which may denote mystical experience. Since al-Ghazâlî fails to pay strict attention to technical terms and states (see above) that the importance lies in the meaning of an idea and not in its technical expression, his use of these terms does not help us



in establishing his stand concerning the nature of this knowledge, whether such knowledge is attained through mystical experience or through rational arguments. It seems to me that al-Ghazâlî alludes to his conception of the highest pleasure which stems from the highest knowledge when stating that seekers of knowledge are very near to those who know God, and when citing, at the end of chapter four, Şûfîc statements to the effect that man's ultimate goal is looking at (*naẓar*) and meeting (*liqâ'*) God.<sup>73</sup> Chapter five, entitled 'Explanation of why the pleasure of looking at God in the world to come is greater than (the pleasure of) the knowledge in this world,' connects man's knowledge in this world to his knowledge in the world to come. Of this connection we have already learned in the previous chapter in which al-Ghazâlî states that death does not destroy the substrate of the knowledge of God (*maḥall marifat allâh*) which is the spirit (*rûḥ*), a heavenly divine matter. Incidentally we learn that al-Ghazâlî holds the immateriality and immortality of man's soul. Expressing a Platonic notion, al-Ghazâlî states that only death releases the spirit from its material impediments, that is from its prison.<sup>74</sup> Thus, man's knowledge continues to live in the world to come. We shall now turn to discuss chapter five which shows that al-Ghazâlî seems to have inclined to hold rational mysticism.

Seeing God (*ru'yat allâh*) is the Muslim's best reward in the hereafter.<sup>75</sup> The real meaning of this dogma has been much debated in theological circles.<sup>76</sup> The likeners (*mushabbihûn*) interpreted Qur'ân verses (for instance 75.22-23, 10.26, 85.15, 7.43)<sup>77</sup> literally maintaining that people will see God openly as they look at each other. On the other hand, the Mu'tazilites, the Zaydites, the Khârijites, and most of the Murji'ites connected this question with anthropomorphism (*tashbîḥ*) arguing that since God is neither a body (*jism*) nor an accident (*'araḍ*),

He cannot be seen either in this world or in the afterworld. For most Mu'tazilites, with the exception of Hishâm al-Fuwaṭî and 'Abbâd ibn Sulaymân, to see God is to know Him. The orthodox theologians held an intermediate position known as the *bi-lâ kayfa* doctrine,<sup>78</sup> according to which seeing God is true (*al-ru'ya ḥaqq*), but its modality (*kayfiyya*) is unknown.<sup>79</sup> Some later Ash'arite theologians believed that *ru'yat allâh* is a kind of knowledge.<sup>80</sup>

The foundation of al-Ghazâlî's discussion on seeing God is the distinction he makes between two kinds of things perceived: a. things perceived (*mudrakât*) by imagination (*khayâl*), such as bodies of any sort; and b. things which are not perceived by imagination, namely, those which are not bodies, such as God and His attributes of knowledge, power, will, and so on. Bodies can be perceived either by seeing or by imagination. For example, a man sees another man, then afterwards he can shut his eyes and see the form of this man in his imagination. The difference between the two perceptions does not lie in a distinction of forms, for the form seen is the form imagined, but rather it lies in the state of clarity. The form seen appears clearer than the form imagined. From the point of view of disclosure (*kashf*) and clarity, the first phase of perception is imagination and what makes it perfect is seeing (*ru'ya*). *Ru'ya* is so called because it is the utmost degree of disclosure, not because it is fixed in the eyes.

In like manner, the knowledge of the things known (*ma'lûmât*) not by imagination is divided into two kinds: a. the first knowledge, the unclear and imperfect knowledge; and b. the clear and perfect knowledge. The relation between *a* and *b* exactly corresponds to the relation between imagination and seeing. Just as seeing, the utmost degree of disclosure, is impeded by shutting the eyes, so man's perfect knowledge of things which are not perceived by imagination is impeded by bodily desires and human material qualities. Since bodily obstacles are removed in the



hereafter, man's knowledge of God and His attributes becomes perfect.<sup>81</sup> There is no difference in essence between man's knowledge of God in this world and his knowledge of Him in the world to come, but there is difference in degree; the knowledge in the world to come is perfect.<sup>82</sup> 'The knowledge which is attained in this world, this knowledge itself, is to be complemented, reach the perfect disclosure and clarity and become perfect perception, or intellectual seeing (*mushâhada*).<sup>83</sup> There will be no difference between the perfect perception in the hereafter and the perception of things in this world but with regard to additional unveiling and clarity.'<sup>84</sup>

Now, of what kind of knowledge al-Ghazâlî is speaking? According to al-Ghazâlî, God and His attributes are perceived neither by the senses nor by imagination. Are these perceived by *gnosis*, meaning mystical knowledge attained by a sudden revelation? In the third volume of *Ihyâ'*, our author differentiates between knowledge which attacks man's heart suddenly, and knowledge which man acquires by putting forth proofs and by learning. The first knowledge is called inspiration (*ilhâm*) and the second learning and reflection (*i'tibâr, istibâr*). Inspiration is divided in turn into a. knowledge which man does not know how and whence it comes to him. Its recipients are saints and pure or chosen persons (*awliyâ', aṣfiyâ'*); and b. knowledge whose source is known, meaning the angel who transmits knowledge to man. This knowledge is denoted by the term revelation (*wahy*), and belongs to the prophets.<sup>85</sup> Again al-Ghazâlî is not precise in using technical terms; *ilhâm* is both the general term for knowledge which is not acquired and for the knowledge of saints. Anyhow, according to al-Ghazâlî, man's heart is ready for the revelation of the real meaning of all things. Using the famous metaphor of the mirror,<sup>86</sup> he states that man's heart is like a mirror which faces the mirror of the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfûz*) on which God has

written all knowledge. The transmission of pieces of knowledge from the Preserved Tablet to man's heart is like the transmission of forms from one mirror to another facing the former. Now, there is a screen between the two mirrors which can be removed by either one's hand or by the wind. In reality, the screen represents five obstacles preventing man from attaining knowledge: 1. imperfection of the heart, meaning the intellect; 2. sins and desires which hurt man's intellect; 3. the intellect does not turn to the right direction, which means that it does not look for the true objects of knowledge; 4. accepting dogmas and notions without criticism (*taqlîd*);<sup>87</sup> 5. ignorance of premises needed to built syllogisms.<sup>88</sup> Let us return to the explanation of the metaphor. The removal of the screen by the hand represents acquisition of knowledge through one's efforts, while its removal by the wind represents God's grace which removes the screen so that a part of what is written on the Preserved Tablet is revealed to man.

The removal of the screen occurs sometimes in sleep,<sup>89</sup> sometimes in waking, but the total removal occurs in death. When occurring in waking hours knowledge sometimes strikes suddenly like a flash of lightning,<sup>90</sup> and sometimes it lasts for a while. Such a lasting revelation, though, is very rare. It is worth noting that, in al-Ghazâlî's view, there is no difference between receiving knowledge through inspiration or through acquisition with regard to the essence of knowledge, the substrate of knowledge, and the cause of knowledge.<sup>91</sup> The only difference lies in the occurrence of inspiration with or without man's choice.<sup>92</sup>

What is al-Ghazâlî's attitude toward these two types of knowledge? Does he prefer inspiration or acquisition? And what are the implications of the answers to these questions on the issue with which we are dealing, that is, the looking at God and its prefatory phase in this world. First he brings forth the way of the Ṣûfis; they incline to the sciences of



inspiration (*al-'ulûm al-ilhâmiyya*), and not to the sciences of instruction (*al-'ulûm al-ta'limiyya*), therefore they do not learn views and proofs which occur in scientific books. They believe in asceticism, in erasing the blameworthy qualities, and in sincere turning to God alone according to which one thinks only on God and mentions His name. After self-purification man is ready and expecting to receive inspiration from God. This process applies only to prophets and saints.<sup>93</sup> However, it does not remain without criticism put in the mouth of learned people (or scholars *nuzẓâr, dhawû al-i'tibâr*). The fact that al-Ghazâlî does not rejoin to this criticism may allude to his agreement with it, although he does not say this explicitly. It is possible that this criticism is directed toward ordinary people who think that they can receive inspiration through the way mentioned above. A similar mistake was made by those who believe in the incarnation of God in man's body (*ḥulûl*). They thought that ascetic practice would lead them to pass away (*fanâ'*) from their attributes and to the incarnation of God's attributes in them.<sup>94</sup>

The scholars who criticize the Ṣûfîs do not deny the possible occurrence of the mystic way of attaining knowledge, but affirm its rarity regarding most people with the exclusion of prophets and saints. According to the critics, it is difficult to achieve this stage, for man's erasing his connections with this world is almost impossible, and even if one attains this condition, its continuance is more inconceivable, because one's heart is liable to changes caused by blameworthy motives which instigate man to carry out evil acts.<sup>95</sup> If, before practicing the ascetic life, one does not deal with true sciences, one will face the danger of false imaginations which one will consider true revelation. Knowledge should serve as a criterion for what is revealed to the Ṣûfî, therefore it must precede his ascetic practice. The way of learning is more confident and nearer to the mystical goal than the way of inspiration. Those

scholars argue that the state of one who does not engage in sciences and waits for inspiration to come in order to know resembles the state of one who omits learning jurisprudence claiming that the Prophet did not learn it and became jurisprudent by inspiration. Here, incidentally, al-Ghazâlî unusually inserts into the context a personal note: 'ascetic practice also sometimes brought me to inspiration.'<sup>96</sup> If my understanding of this sentence, in the light of its context, is correct, it indicates that al-Ghazâlî himself was disappointed in ascetic practice as a means to reveal the truth. Whoever thinks that ascetic practice is sufficient is like whoever does not act expecting to find a treasure; it is possible that he will find a treasure, but it is very unlikely. They say that one should first learn and understand the knowledge acquired by the scholars and 'then there is no objection to expect what was not revealed to all the scholars; maybe it will be revealed (after learning) through ascetic practice.'<sup>97</sup> Although al-Ghazâlî introduces the combination of learning and ascetic practice as the view of the learned people, he seems to have accepted it – at least with regard to erudite persons, because he agrees without reservation to the reception of inspiration by prophets and saints – for he expresses no objection whatsoever to this view. Furthermore, he does not rejoin to the criticism leveled against the Ṣûfîs. Thus, according to our author, an ordinary intelligent person should learn sciences and practice the ascetic way of life in order to be ready for inspiration. It should be noted that in a chapter which deals with religious pieces of evidence for the notion that the Ṣûfîc way of acquiring knowledge not from learning is right,<sup>98</sup> al-Ghazâlî brings forward stories of great Ṣûfîs who knew past and future events. However, no Ṣûfî is said to have known sciences, or the real meanings of things. Finally, one should notice that according to al-Ghazâlî, happiness (*sa'âda*) is attained only through knowledge, be it knowledge acquired by learning or knowledge received



by inspiration. It is worth noting that, like the illuminationist philosopher al-Suhrawardî (d. 587/1191), al-Ghazâlî held that inspiration or mystical experience is not sufficient for real knowledge without a previous rational structure which can explain the content of inspiration.<sup>99</sup> However, while al-Suhrawardî 'begins with the structure of reality as we experience it rather than with the structure of our conceptual knowledge of reality,'<sup>100</sup> or in other words al-Suhrawardî held that mystical intuition precedes rational thought, al-Ghazâlî seems to prefer the precedence of rational structure over the mystical experience.<sup>101</sup>

Let us now return to the discussion of chapter five in *Kitâb al-maḥabba*. To recapitulate the main idea of this chapter: The knowledge attained in this world is complemented in the hereafter and made perfect. Al-Ghazâlî reiterates the notion that knowledge may be received through inspiration after practicing asceticism, but it may be confused by thoughts and evil motives, so that only in death man attains complete disconnection from material things. Moreover, in most cases, inspiration lasts a short time like a flash of lightning.<sup>102</sup> It is no wonder, then, that al-Ghazâlî emphasizes knowledge attained through learning and reflection. A long life is a guarantee for the multiplication of knowledge through continuance of reflection (*fikr*) and insistence on ascetic practice.<sup>103</sup> Chapter six ('Explanation of the causes which strengthen the love for God') provides us with further information concerning the question with which we are dealing.

Al-Ghazâlî points out two causes which strengthen the love for God: a. the removal from the heart of what connects man to this world and to the things other than God which man loves. Each object of love other than God decreases man's love for God. 'The stations which we have mentioned, namely, repentance (*tawba*), forbearance

(*ṣabr*), abstinence (*zuhd*), fear (*khawf*), and hope (*rajâ'*), are preambles to the acquisition of one of the basic elements of love which is the evacuation from the heart of anything except God.'<sup>104</sup> b. As we have seen, one's love stems from one's pleasure which in turn stems from one's knowledge or perception. It is possible to attain knowledge only after man disconnects himself from worldly affairs which distract man from reflection on God, His attributes, and creation. Those who attain knowledge are divided into two groups. The first group is composed of persons called the strong (*al-aqwiyyâ'*) who know all things through their preliminary knowledge of God. Al-Ghazâlî may mean by this knowledge the knowledge which is achieved through inspiration or revelation, that is, the knowledge of prophets and saints. What corroborates this understanding is al-Ghazâlî's reference to it as an obscure matter which most people cannot comprehend. The second group is composed of persons called the weak (*al-du'afâ'*) who first observe phenomena in the world, then deduce from these the existence of the Creator. This way of knowing God is easy for most people, and the Qur'ân calls on people to carry it out through observing and reflecting on the world's phenomena.<sup>105</sup> Actually the argument from design is set forth here in two phases: discussion of phenomena observed in the heavens (the spheres, the stars) and of phenomena on earth (man's body and its composition, the forms of animals). Al-Ghazâlî emphasizes the functionality of nature and the wisdom observed even in the smallest creatures.<sup>106</sup> Inasmuch as the knowledge of God's wonders increases, so the love for God increases. Although this way of knowledge which deduces God's existence and attributes from phenomena observed in the world is not the strongest way to know God, al-Ghazâlî treats it in detail, very probably because this way pertains to most people, with the exception of prophets and saints. Moreover, when referring to the vast majority this is the highest way, the



reason being that there are three different groups with regard to the knowledge of God: a. those who only know the literal meanings of God's attributes and names and sometimes ascribe to them wrong meanings; b. those who believe in and accept God's attributes and names, but do not enter into discussion of them; and c. those who know the real meanings of God's attributes and names.<sup>107</sup> As an example, al-Ghazâlî brings forward the followers of al-Shâfi'î (d. 205/820), the eponym of the Shâfi'ite school of jurisprudence. Being divided into experts in jurisprudence (*fuqahâ'*) and commoners (*'awwâm*), they all share the love for al-Shâfi'î, for they know his excellence and piety. However, the commoner knows al-Shâfi'î's characteristics in a general way, whereas the expert knows them in detail. As a result, the expert's knowledge of his master, and hence his love for him, is more complete than the commoner's. The same rule applies to other arts, such as poetry and prose, and undoubtedly to God's creations. Since the knowledge of God's wonders is infinite, like a sea without a shore, people differ in their knowledge of God and consequently in their love for Him.<sup>108</sup> Again we see that al-Ghazâlî concentrates on man's efforts to accumulate knowledge of God which will bring him happiness in the world to come. It is to be noted that the intensity of love changes according to its cause. Thus love which is depended on God's benefaction may increase or decrease according to the measure of benefits the lover thinks that he receives. Another point to be stressed is that the degree of love in this world establishes the degree of happiness in the world to come.

The process of learning is obstructed not only due to man's being absorbed in desires and material things, but also due to the object of knowledge, namely God. Here lies one of the paradoxes of the knowledge of God.<sup>109</sup> We would expect God to be first perceived, for He is the most manifest existent. His being the most evident existent stems

from the infinite phenomena which testify to His existence and His basic attributes, such as life, power, will, and knowledge. If we see a craftsman, like a tailor or a writer in his work, his life, knowledge, power, and will to work, are manifest, because they are deduced from his work. Now, all the phenomena in the world, be they in inanimate things, or in plants, or in animals, or in man, including the changes which occur in him, attest to the existence of the Creator of the world, its Director, and its Mover. Furthermore, they demonstrate God's knowledge, power, generosity, and wisdom. Again al-Ghazâlî sets forth the argument from design.<sup>110</sup> Whereas in the example of the craftsman we deduce our conclusion from one testimony, that is, the motion of the craftsman's hand, we are perplexed by the huge number of phenomena which we observe around us. Such a conclusion which we deduce from phenomena, states al-Ghazâlî, is not known either because the phenomena are hidden and obscure, or are so clear that one cannot notice them. A bat sees at night but cannot see by day, not because daylight is absent, but because daylight is too strong and the bat, having a weak sight, is dazzled. In like manner, man's intellect is weak and the divine presence in all phenomena is so strong that its very manifest appearance is its cause of hiddenness. Al-Ghazâlî further elucidates this paradox of concealment which follows evident appearance. Things are known through their opposites; we know the existence of light by its non-existence. If light did not disappear at night, we could almost not recognize its existence, for things would not change their shapes. The change shows us the cause of the clear appearance of things, which is light. Just as light, which is manifest and makes other things become manifest, so God is manifest (exactly: the most manifest being) and makes other things become manifest. However, unlike light, God has no contrary, that is He is never absent. If God were absent, the heavens and the earth would



collapse, and man would know the difference between the two states, namely His existence and nonexistence. And if some things were existent by virtue of God and others by virtue of another being, one would know the existence of God by knowing the difference between the two conditions. However, signs attesting to God exist perpetually in all things without exception, and the opposite state is inconceivable. Hence, the intensity of God's presence causes His being hidden.<sup>111</sup>

At the end of this chapter (8), al-Ghazâlî adds another reason for the inability of man to learn from nature about God. Man sees the phenomena around him from childhood when his intellect is absent. Then as intellect gradually appears, man pays little attention to the phenomena around him (which are decisive pieces of evidence for God) either because he is absorbed in his desires or because he has become accustomed to the phenomena.<sup>112</sup>

Although the knowledge of God's existence is difficult both owing to His total presence in things and man's weak perception, there is the possibility that whoever has strong intellect will perceive that the only true existent is God and that He is the source of all existing things. Such a man pays attention not to the acts, namely, heaven, earth, animals, and plants, but to the Agent; he observes the phenomena from the point of view of their producer rather than their activity. He sees only God, and even looks on himself not in terms of his essence but as his being a slave of God.<sup>113</sup> Such a person is said to have been annihilated in God's unity (*faniya fî'l-tawhîd*) and to have been unaware of himself (*faniya 'an nafsîhi*). Here al-Ghazâlî expresses the notion of *waḥdat al-shuhûd* which means that one is aware of God's true existence as opposed to the metaphorical existence of all other beings,<sup>114</sup> but it is not an ontological unity between man and God, a unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujûd*) which extreme Ṣûfîs like Ibn al-'Arabî (d. 638/1240) held.<sup>115</sup> Following al-Junayd, al-Ghazâlî

believes that when a man is aware of his untrue existence and of God's true existence, he is annihilated and God alone remains. Zaehner notes on this statement that 'whether Junayd and Ghazâlî really believed this – for it is equivalent to denying one's own existence, which is absurd, – we cannot say.'<sup>116</sup> Al-Ghazâlî makes a distinction between real and metaphorical existence. A real existent is that which exists by virtue of itself, while a metaphorical existent is that which exists by virtue of another. Since created beings derive their existence from God, considered as themselves, they are non-existent. The knowledge that the only real existent is God is attained either through inquiry of the intellect, or through mystical experience.<sup>117</sup> Consequently, denying one's own existence is not absurd, on the condition of our understanding of existence. In the light of this explanation one cannot blame al-Ghazâlî of infidelity,<sup>118</sup> neither in the *Iḥyâ'* and *Kîmiyâ' al-sa'âda* nor in the *Mishkât*. Nowhere does he speak of ontological union or identity with God. Only those who are in the state of drunkenness may feel union or identity with God, however, their feeling does not reflect objective reality which should be known according to the judgment of the intellect, namely God's balance on earth (*mîzân allâh fî arḍîhi*).<sup>119</sup>

Already Sahl al-Tustarî (d. 283/896) expressed the notion that since God is the sole real agent in existence, and the only cause of existence, He is the only real existent.<sup>120</sup> That this is the reasoning of al-Ghazâlî is also proved by the passages in *Kitâb al-tawhîd wa'l-tawakkul* which deals with the acceptance of God's unity (*tawhîd*). Al-Ghazâlî divides those who accept God's unity into four groups: a. those who utter the statement 'there is no god except God' without paying attention to its content or while in fact denying it; b. those, like all Muslims, who accept God's unity as true. Their belief is sometimes based on speculative arguments. This is the *tawhîd* of the commoners



(*al-‘awwâm*); c. those who see many things, but nevertheless consider them as originating from one agent; and d. those who see in the world only God, and do not see even themselves. In this stage, one passes away from one's consciousness, on account of being immersed in God's unity (*al-fanâ' fî'l-tawhîd*).<sup>121</sup> Also in al-Junayd we find four-part division of holders of *tawhîd* which approximately corresponds to al-Ghazâlî's. The first group is the common people, who, although regarding God as the only god, still rely on forces other than God. The second group consists of people who are well versed in the formal aspects of religion. They assert God's unity and prove it publicly. The third and the fourth groups are the élite among the people of *gnosis* (*al-khawâṣṣ min ahl al-ma'rifa*). The third group espouses God's unity by considering all things other than God non-existent. They rely only on God. In the fourth stage of *tawhîd* people pass away from their awareness of themselves, lose their individuality and see only God. They return to their original state before their existence.<sup>122</sup> Very probably al-Ghazâlî's position in this issue was influenced by al-Junayd.

Using Stace's differentiation between extrovertive and introvertive mysticism we can analyze al-Ghazâlî's attitude toward the assertion of God's unity. Both the extrovertive and the introvertive ways are perception of the One, in other words the ultimate unity in all things. But while the extrovertive way finds this unity through the work of the senses on the external phenomena, the introvertive way finds it through examination of the self. In the history of mysticism, the introvertive is superior to the extrovertive both in importance and in number of occurrences.<sup>123</sup> Al-Ghazâlî seems to adopt the extrovertive process which begins with the third stage of the assertion of unity in which one observes that all things originate in one entity. And in the fourth stage 'one does not consider (*yarâ*) the whole as many but as one.'<sup>124</sup> The whole process seems to

be intellectual. The vocabulary used by al-Ghazâlî also helps to support this argument. He states that a thing may be 'many' from one perspective (*i'tibâr*) and 'one' from another. For instance, man is 'many' because he consists of many parts, and 'one' in relation to another man.<sup>125</sup> Here he neither speaks of a sudden perception of God's unity nor of an inner perception of this unity.

In chapter nine al-Ghazâlî deals with passionate longing for God (*shawq*). Once more our author emphasizes his conviction that knowledge is an indispensable element in man's love for God. Passionate longing for God is discussed from the point of view of knowledge. First al-Ghazâlî establishes the connection between love and *shawq*. To think of *shawq* being directed toward a beloved entity which is present is inconceivable, states al-Ghazâlî, for *shawq* means seeking something, and one does not look for something which is present. However, wishing to be more precise, al-Ghazâlî says that *shawq* means to long for a thing which is perceived in a certain respect and not in another. Thus, what cannot absolutely be perceived is not longed for. It is inconceivable to long for someone not seen and whose description is not known.<sup>126</sup> And on the contrary, what is perceived in its totality is not longed for (*mâ udrika bi-kamâlihi lâ yushtâqu ilayhi*). According to al-Ghazâlî, the perfect perception is seeing. Hence, whoever always sees his beloved, does not long for him.<sup>127</sup> To illustrate his principle that *shawq* for a thing means longing for its perception from a different point of view, al-Ghazâlî brings two examples: a. when a beloved person disappears from the lover's sight, he remains in the lover's imagination, and the lover longs for the completion of his imagination through seeing. If the lover saw the beloved person, it would be inconceivable that the former should long for the latter; and b. the lover may see only a part of the beloved person and may thus long for seeing other parts, or he may know that the beloved person has



beautiful organs therefore longs to see what he was unable to see at all. These two aspects of *shawq*, the first longing for clearer knowledge and the second for more knowledge, which are necessarily attached to every knower, apply to the knowledge of God. The knowledge of divine matters, even if it is very clear, remains behind a fine screen and therefore not absolutely clear. This screen is a metaphor for imaginations and material matters which impede the attaining of the clearest knowledge. As al-Ghazâlî says in chapter five, the knowledge of this world becomes perfectly revealed in the afterworld. The fact that man has only a partial knowledge necessitates *shawq* which is likely to supply him with the motivation to obtain clearer knowledge. Also the second kind of *shawq* applies to man's knowledge of God, for man knows only parts of the divine matters, and he wants to know more. Consequently, he longs for more pieces of divine knowledge which he does not know at all, either in clear or obscure fashion. The first kind of *shawq* comes to an end in the world to come through what is called (*mâ yusammâ*)<sup>128</sup> seeing (*ru'ya*, *mushâhada*) and meeting (*liqâ'*) interpreted by al-Ghazâlî to mean knowledge. He does not define exactly the essence of this knowledge, but says that this is the knowledge one attains in this world in an obscure form. The second kind of *shawq* ends neither in this world nor in the afterworld, for its end means the knowledge of what God knows, namely His majesty, attributes, wisdom, and acts, which is impossible for a human being to know. This guarantees that even in the afterworld man will continue to long for God and to love Him.<sup>129</sup> It is not inconceivable that divine assistance (*lutf*) would continue without interruption to make man reflect on God, and hence his pleasure would be increasing for ever. The pleasure of receiving divine assistance will divert man from feeling the longing for the knowledge he has not yet received.<sup>130</sup> By the last statement al-Ghazâlî seems to solve the contradiction between the

pleasure of Paradise which God promises and the sorrow involved in longing for more knowledge of God. To recapitulate, the condition for this process of continuing pleasure which derives from perpetually receiving pieces of knowledge in the world to come is the knowledge which man acquires in this world. Using the common metaphor of light which denotes knowledge, al-Ghazâlî corroborates his theory by Qur'ân verses, for example 66.8: '... their light running before them, and on their right hands; and they say, Our Lord, perfect for us our light ...' (trans. Arberry) The notion of *shawq* is undoubtedly the Muslim version of *eros*, the unending longing for the perception of the eternal entity. Al-Ghazâlî's achievement consists in the combination of the *eros* motif with the Muslim idea of eternal pleasure in Paradise. However, while not denying bodily pleasures, our author stresses that the highest pleasure in the world to come is purely intellectual. In his system he blends Islamic teachings with the philosophical view.

Through his theory of *shawq*, al-Ghazâlî explains Muslim notions about the connection between this world and the world to come and the modality of eternal pleasure in the afterworld. Whereas in the ordinary dogma, a man who carries out the precepts and leads a moral life will enter Paradise and enjoy the sensual pleasures therein, in al-Ghazâlî's view, the fulfillment of the precepts and the conduct of a moral life are only prerequisites to cleansing the heart in order to qualify it to receive knowledge from God directly or to acquire knowledge through one's efforts. Knowledge is the key concept of al-Ghazâlî's theory; it produces the connection between this world and the afterworld, and it is the source of man's eternal pleasure in the afterworld. However, al-Ghazâlî is careful not to omit the usual Muslim dogma of life in Paradise, although, in his view, the material pleasure man is given in Paradise is not the highest pleasure, for the highest pleasure is spiritual. In chapter eleven, which deals with the signs of man's love for



God (*'alâmât maḥabbat al-'abd li-allâh*), al-Ghazâlî states that man will be given in Paradise what he hopes for in this world.<sup>131</sup> He makes a distinction between those who will be given material pleasure in Paradise and those who will have the spiritual pleasure of coming near to God. This notion is corroborated by a prophetic tradition to the effect that most people of Paradise are stupid (*akthar ahl al-janna al-bulhu*) and the upper place (*'illiyyûn*)<sup>132</sup> is given to the intelligent. Once again al-Ghazâlî states that the highest pleasure is connected with knowledge.

### 5. The signs of love

One must examine himself to know whether his love for God is sincere or false, for the Devil or even man's soul may deceive him into believing that he loves God. Signs of sincere love, which is the subject matter of chapter eleven, are discerned on different levels. We can characterize signs of love according to thought or will, feeling, state, and activity. Al-Ghazâlî's first criterion for testing love is one's aspiration to see and meet his beloved. As in terrestrial love, it is inconceivable that a lover would not wish to meet and see his beloved. In the case of love for God, meeting and seeing means death, hence the lover should be ready and willing to leave this world in order to meet God.<sup>133</sup> Fighting for the sake of God and the will to sacrifice one's life in a Holy War (*jihâd*) testify to one's love for God. Al-Ghazâlî qualifies his absolute statement by saying that one's hatred for death does not indicate the denial of love for God but only absence of perfect love. It is possible that a man can partially love God, because he loves his family and property. Hence, there are various degrees of love. It is also possible that a man would be at the beginning of the station of love (*maqâm al-ḥubb*), therefore he does not abhor death, but only its quick coming before he is ready

to meet God. In such a case one's love is not weak and it does not deny perfect love, for the lover is engaged in preparing himself to meet God.<sup>134</sup>

Another sign of love for God, included in the criterion of thought, is the lover's preference for what God loves to what he loves manifestly or secretly. Consequently, the lover abstains from following his desires and is industrious in obeying God and carrying out supererogatory acts (the activity criterion). Furthermore, he should not regard obedience as a burden, but as a pleasure. This kind of love expressed by obedience to God is called, as we have seen, *nomos*, and it characterizes the love for God in the Bible.<sup>135</sup> Moreover, when love increases it subdues desires and causes man to obey God. Disobedience, states al-Ghazâlî, does not contradict the basis of love, but only its perfection. Just as a sick man may eat something harmful, although he loves himself, so a man may disobey God, due to ignorance or desires, although he loves Him. Another sign included in the criteria of activity and feeling is the mention of God and that connected to God such as the Qur'ân, and the love for what has any reference to God, such as the Qur'ân, the Messenger, and all people for whom he must feel pity.<sup>136</sup> Sometimes the criteria of feeling, state, and activity are mingled, for example when a man rejoices at being in solitude (*unsuhu bi'l-khalwa*)<sup>137</sup> and conversing intimately with God at night. Furthermore, the lover should not be sad about what he missed, except for hours in which he did not mention and obey God. The adherence of the lover to his love is so great – it is compared to the child's attachment to a beloved toy – that he is afraid of its loss, through, for example, the beloved's keeping away from him, or the lover's turning to another object of love. There is an advantage in the lover's fear, because if the love for God increases and the knowledge of Him overcomes man's heart, he cannot endure such a situation. The function of fear thus is to lessen the impression of love on man which



can cause bewilderment. Al-Ghazâlî stresses that there are portions of knowledge which ordinary human beings cannot share with the gnostics. 'Whoever receives knowledge through revelation (*man inkashafa lahu*) is not allowed to transmit this knowledge to whomever did not receive knowledge through revelation. Moreover, if people shared this knowledge, the world would be destroyed. Reason dictates that for the sake of maintaining civilization people should be heedless. If all people ate permitted food for forty days, the world would be destroyed owing to their asceticism, and markets and means of subsistence would be annulled.'<sup>138</sup> Actually, al-Ghazâlî rejects the possibility of absolute realization of moral values in this world, and admits that the present condition of the world in which good and evil are mingled is the best possible state of affairs provided by God's knowledge and power. This is reminiscent of al-Ghazâlî's famous dictum 'it is impossible that there should be something more wonderful than the present world' (*laysa fi'l-imkân abda' mimma kâna*). In other words, this world is the most wonderful world which God could create.<sup>139</sup> Here al-Ghazâlî does not explain the reason of the existence of good and evil in this world, but only states that there are secrets behind their existence and that God's wisdom and power are infinite, which means that man cannot attain absolute knowledge.

Another feature of the lover is the hiding of his love in order to magnify the Beloved and out of fear of Him and jealousy of His secret. That is because the lover does not know exactly the state of his love, and hence he may claim something false regarding it. The lover is forgiven for expressing his love openly only if this occurs in a state of mystical intoxication (*sakra*) in which he is overcome by an irresistible external force. Apart from reasoning the hiding of love for fear of informing a false state of affairs, the manifestation of one's love is forbidden because of the danger of expressing arrogance.<sup>140</sup> The lover should intend

to inform his love only to his beloved. Informing love to someone else is regarded as making someone share this love (*shirk fi'l-hubb*). Love, in al-Ghazâlî's view, is a private matter between the lover and the beloved, and when the lover brings someone else into his love by telling him about it, he impedes this privacy. Moreover, the lover must be humble and not divulge his love, for in relation to the angels' great love for God, expressed through their perpetual obedience and complete devotion to God, his love is imperfect.<sup>141</sup>

Although man is forbidden to intentionally manifest his love, his love is disclosed by his acts and states and even by his bodily liquids. Al-Junayd (d. 298/910) related that when his master Sarî al-Saqatî (d. ca. 253/867) was ill and the cause of his illness was unknown, a physician was called. After examining his patient's urine, the doctor diagnosed al-Saqatî's disease as love, saying: 'I consider it the urine of a passionate lover' (*arâhu bawl 'âshiq*). Admitting the physician's talent, al-Saqatî agreed with his diagnosis, to al-Junayd's astonishment.<sup>142</sup> Finally, al-Ghazâlî says, all good morals are the fruit of love. This statement widens the sphere of the signs of love. However, there are signs which seem to be more important than others and to which our author devotes whole chapters. These are *uns* and *riqâ*.

As we have seen (above n. 137), al-Ghazâlî defines *uns* as the heart's rejoicing caused by perceiving the presence of God. When this state increases, a man wants to live in solitude, and even if a man lives among people, he feels that he is alone.<sup>143</sup> Another sign or result of love is contentment (*riqâ*) which means that one is content with God's acts. This state is divided into two parts: a. the state of whoever is so absorbed in his love for God that he does not feel pains which he would feel if he did not love. Sahl al-Tustarî (d. 283/896) expresses this kind of contentment by the maxim 'the beating of a lover does not hurt' (*ḍarb al-ḥabîb*



*lâ yûji'u*).<sup>144</sup> b. the state of whoever feels pains but is content with them. Moreover, such a person requires pain in terms of his intellect even if his nature detests it. That is because he either expects a reward from God, or because he wants to fulfill the beloved's will. Since this state is found in terrestrial love, the more so in love for God.<sup>145</sup> Al-Ghazâlî ends the chapter on contentment (ch. 13) with relevant Şûfî stories, and with a discussion of the apparent contradiction between contentment with God's actions and contentment with transgressions of God's precepts. This issue deserves careful consideration, for it shows again al-Ghazâlî's rational mysticism.

'Qur'ân verses and traditions inform on contentment with God's decree (*qadâ' allâh*). If sins do not derive from God's decree, this is an absurdity, for (such a notion) infringes God's unity.<sup>146</sup> (On the other hand), if sins derive from God's decree, one must detest them, and hence detest God's decree . . . How can one join between contentment and detestation regarding one thing?'<sup>147</sup> In other words, if we state that sins are not decreed by God, we impair the notion of God's unity, and if we state that they are decreed by God, we must detest God's decree, for we detest sins. Al-Ghazâlî answers saying that contentment and detestation contradict each other when they refer to one thing from one point of view. One can be content with a thing because of a certain point of view and detest it because of another point of view. The death of one's enemy makes one's content, but if this enemy is also the enemy of one's enemies, one would not be content with his death. Likewise, says al-Ghazâlî, we can examine sins in the light of two points of view: a. Sins are God's acts and choice, and hence one is content with them; and b. they are man's acquisition (*kasb*),<sup>148</sup> meaning his acts, and they are signs that God hates the sinner. Therefore, the sinner is detested by man. A contradiction would arise, if we said that man's sins are detested and contented with as God's acts. Why the

sinner should be detested although God makes him sin through providing him with motives of disobedience is not explained by al-Ghazâlî. He only states that God's decree is a secret which no one is allowed to reveal.

## 6. God's love for man

Al-Ghazâlî also deals with God's love for man (ch. 10). As other Şûfîs, he has relatively little to say of this kind of love. His foundation for this love is some Qur'ân verses, for example 'a people He loves, and who loves Him' (Qur'ân 5.54), 'God loves those who fight for His sake' (Qur'ân 4.61), and 'God loves those who repent and those who cleanse themselves' (Qur'ân 2.222), and also some traditions, for example, as mentioned above: 'When my servant constantly draws near to me by works of supererogation, then do I love him, and once I have started to love him, I become his eye by which he sees, his ear by which he hears, and his tongue by which he speaks'. However, when we come to the heart and essence of our topic, we cannot apply the definition of love, namely, the inclination of one's soul to what befits it, nor the principal causes of love, namely, doing good (*ihsân*) and beauty (*jamâl*), to God. That is because an imperfect essence benefits from what befits it by achieving perfection and pleasure, a process inconceivable with regard to God for whom every beauty and perfection is possible, and actually all perfections are present in Him eternally. Since the existence of every thing except God derives from the existence of God, which means that there is nothing but His essence and acts, God does not look at anything except at His essence and acts. Consequently, He loves only Himself in which all creation is included.<sup>149</sup> The word love, as other words and terms which apply both to God and man, is a homonym (*ism mushtarak*), hence it bears one meaning



when applied to God and another when applied to man. If God's love refers to His eternal will, it means giving man power (*tamkîn*)<sup>150</sup> to come near to God, and if His love refers to His act, it means unveiling the partition from man's heart so that he can see God in his heart. Contrary to God's will, this act is produced in time in the wake of a cause which is man's performing supererogatory works. However, this cause too expresses both God's act and His graceful assistance (*lutf*), and this is the meaning of His love. What al-Ghazâlî is actually saying is that God's love for man is the cause of man's love for Him, a notion reminiscent of the *agape* motif. If God did not give man His graceful assistance, man would not love Him.<sup>151</sup> Hence, says al-Ghazâlî, the signs of man's love for God also derive from the signs of God's love for man,<sup>152</sup> that is very probably because God's love for man brings about man's love for God.

### 7. Summary

Although from the metaphysical point of view God causes man to love Him, from the point of view of man, the attitude is not one of passivity. Man should not wait for God's assistance, but work and be active for the purpose of knowing the world and its phenomena which is the requisite for knowing God and hence loving Him. Intellectual efforts play an important role in al-Ghazâlî's theory of love. In that, he expresses a naturalistic stand which resembles the philosophers'. Advocating the possibility of happiness in this world, he emphasizes, however, that the highest happiness man can achieve is in the world to come. The last happiness takes the form of a continuous love for God which is never ending because man's knowledge of God increases forever. In combining love for God in this world and the world to come, al-Ghazâlî seems

to reconcile the Aristotelian position of mundane happiness and the Neoplatonist position of the happiness of the soul.<sup>153</sup> Al-Ghazâlî expresses the *eros* motif in Islamic dress. Man always has to aspire for perfection which is stated in terms of knowledge and spiritual pleasure. Like Plato, he compares true love with seeing of the beloved,<sup>154</sup> in his case, seeing of God. His conception of love is egocentric; man's needs, pleasure, and happiness are placed in the center of the discussion. Man needs God for his existence and subsistence, his supreme pleasure is to know God, and his knowledge of God will bring him to the highest happiness, namely his perpetual love for God.<sup>155</sup>

Does al-Ghazâlî believe in a possibility of universal love for God? Can all people love God? Al-Ghazâlî does not pose this question, and we can only suggest his answer. While seemingly not denying love for God from any person, he appears to advocate different degrees of love. That is because if love depends on knowledge, and naturally people vary with regard to their possession of knowledge, there are necessarily different degrees of love. Consequently, the best lover is the best knower of God and the world, and the worst lover is the ignorant. Moral traits are desired not by virtue of themselves, but as requisites for acquiring knowledge, for they disconnect man from materiality which constitutes the veil between man and knowledge.

Al-Ghazâlî's theory of love is religious, for it is directed toward God; it is intellectual, for it is formulated in terms of knowledge; and it is mystical, for it regards the nearness to God as a value. Notwithstanding citations from the Qur'ân, the traditions, and mystics' sayings, which appear mainly as corroboration and not as a point of departure, his theory seems to be more philosophical than orthodox in nature. However, it is Islamic, for the philosophical ideas are interwoven with Islamic ideas on this world and the



world to come. In the final analysis al-Ghazâlî presents an Islamic version of the *eros* motif combined with Islamic ideas on the world to come.

As for his sources, it is evident that they can mainly be traced back to Greek philosophy not directly but through the medium of Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sînâ and Ikhwân al-Şafâ'. Muslim mystics who exercised some influence on him are al-Junayd, al-Muĥāsibî, and Abû Tâlib al-Makkî.

### III AL-DABBÂGH'S THEORY OF DIVINE LOVE

As we have said in the introduction, al-Dabbâgh was influenced by al-Ghazâlî in several areas concerning divine love. However, he developed some of al-Ghazâlî's notions and often analyzed them in a wider form, and also presented ideas not occurring in al-Ghazâlî's writings. In the following discussion we shall try to show al-Ghazâlî's influence on al-Dabbâgh and the latter's way in treating our topic. In the introduction to his *Mashâriq*, al-Dabbâgh sets forth the basic lines of his theory: 'Know that the goal of those who have perfect intellects and excellent souls is to attain the ultimate happiness (*al-sa'âda al-quṣwâ*), which means perpetual life with the angels, seeing the lights of God's holy presence, and taking pleasure in looking at the divine beauty . . .'<sup>2</sup> Thus, the ultimate happiness of the intelligent is to come near to God, an end which can be attained only in the world to come and after training in this world. A man should overcome his natural powers, namely desires and imagination – the latter opposes the prescriptions of the intellect – in order to pave the way for the rule of the intellect. This is not an easy task, because man's soul first meets the bodily pleasures and hence becomes accustomed to love them. Therefore one must present one's soul a more perfect beloved (*ma'shûq*) than bodily desires, and a pleasure which exceeds material pleasure in order to divert the soul from sensual pleasures. This is possible, since man has the potency to adhere to either material or spiritual values.<sup>3</sup>



### 1. The definition of love

We would expect to find the definition of love in the first chapter of *Mashâriq*, however, al-Dabbâgh devotes the second chapter to the problem of definition, maybe, as he says, because there is no objective definition of this term.<sup>4</sup> Anyhow, love is the root of all stations and states (*aṣl jamî' al-maqâmât wa'l-aḥwâl*), for all the states such as will, longing for, and fear, are related to love, whether as a means to it or as a result of it.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, Muḥammad was distinguished as possessing the perfection of this station, and receiving the secret of this station which no other prophet received. To prove this, our author cites three Qur'ân verses, which allude to this idea. 1. 'Whoever obeys the Messenger, obeys God' (Qur'ân 4.80) which can be interpreted to mean 'whoever loves the Messenger, loves God' provided that love is understood according to the *nomos* motif, that is, love is expressed through carrying out God's precepts. 2. 'Those who swear allegiance to you, verily swear allegiance to God' (Qur'ân 48.10), can be interpreted in the same manner. 3. 'Say: if you love God, follow me, then God will love you' (Qur'ân 3.31). According to the plain meaning of this verse, man's love for God results in God's love for man. However, al-Dabbâgh wishes to connect love for the Messenger to love for God, in that the former is the condition of the latter. The Prophet is the means to transmit God's light to the lower world. Through the light he received he called people to God, in order to bring them through his light to God's light.<sup>6</sup>

Al-Dabbâgh turns now to discuss the definition of love, considered by him a station (*maqâm*), and its reality (*ḥaqîqa*). The views on both issues vary, for each person expresses his opinion according to his mystical experience (lit. tasting *dhawq*). However, no one completely perceives the reality of love, and whoever among the people of truth

(*ahl al-taḥqîq*) reaches some portion of it, addresses the people only through allusions. The reality of love is too lofty to be conveyed by words.<sup>7</sup> Notwithstanding, al-Dabbâgh cites some sayings with the qualification that they are only allusions. For example al-Hallâj says: 'Love is your existence with your beloved by removing your qualities, for the totality of the lover's essence fits the totality of the beloved's essence, the lover's absence is identical to the beloved's absence and so with regard to their existence.' Others say: 'Love is the happiness of the heart caused by looking at the beloved's beauty.' 'The reality of love (or the real meaning of love) is that you should efface from your heart everything except your beloved.' 'Love means that you must give yourself absolutely to your beloved, and then nothing remains for you.' 'One does not express truly the reality of love unless one leaves the looking at love and adheres to looking at the beloved.'<sup>8</sup>

For al-Dabbâgh all these different sayings fail to express the reality of love. Rather, they express the result of love, its requisite, its cause, or its condition. Then, as we have mentioned, there exists the problem of language; conventional words cannot express the real meaning of love. And because love itself is the most delicate thing, it cannot be expressed in words taken from the crude sensual world. Moreover, there is a paradox<sup>9</sup> in expressing the reality of love; only the person who experiences love can express its reality, but whoever is dominated by love is intoxicated to such an extent that he cannot communicate his real state. He is like a drunkard who is asked to describe the reality of drunkenness while under its influence, a thing he cannot do, because the alcohol renders him unaware of his situation. But while the state of intoxication is accidental (*'aradî*), meaning that it will disappear and the inebriate will be able to describe his condition when sober, the intoxication of the lover is essential (*dhâtî*) and he cannot



recover from it so as to be able to recount his experience. Still another difficulty in defining love is that a true definition is composed of both genus and difference which love does not have.<sup>10</sup>

Al-Dabbâgh agrees to define love in terms of verbal expression (*'ibâra lafẓiyya*), meaning a definition which does not convey the inner and true sense of love. 'Love is joy which occurs in the soul as a result of imagining the presence of a certain essence' (*ibtihâj yahşulu li'l-nafs 'an taşawwur ḥaḍrat dhât mâ*).<sup>11</sup> Imagination plays a great role in creating feeling in the soul. If the animal soul (*al-nafs al-ḥayawâniyya*) imagines a form which suits its nature, this imagination causes the organs to obtain the imagined form, and if the imagined form does not suit its nature, the soul rejects it with its faculty of anger (*al-quwwa al-ghadabiyya*). Through the imaginations of the animal soul many accidents occur which can be seen on man's skin, such as the red blush of shame. Now, if the animal soul exercises such a strong influence on man, the more so regarding the imaginations of the divine soul. If man's divine soul imagines the nearness of God and the pleasure of seeing Him, which is the goal of all perfection and beauty, the pleasure coming to the knower in this state cannot be measured. No one can express in words his spiritual delight and holy joy (*ṭarabuhu al-rûḥânî wa-ibtihâjuhu al-qudsî*). Whoever thinks about the marvels of God's beauty and perfection loves God and longs for Him. The impossibility of describing in words the lover's pleasure, except by the word 'joy,' when he is imagining the presence of his beloved, is even greater when one refers to the pleasure of higher entities, such as the angels and the knowers (or gnostics). The pleasures of the latter are within their essences and through their essences, meaning without the intervention of outside factors. They receive God's beauty directly, not through the examination of the worldly phenomena.<sup>12</sup>

Unlike al-Ghazâlî, who defines love as one's inclination towards a thing which gives pleasure, al-Dabbâgh defines love in terms of pleasure or joy, which actually is the outcome of love. He then tries to explain the impact of the beloved object on the lover through the latter's imagination. In this way he explains why the impact of a beloved object which is perfect, effects the lover so powerfully. Although both scholars refer to the lover's state, each one deals with a different aspect of this state. Al-Ghazâlî points out the need of the lover for the beloved which is expressed by the lover's inclination toward the beloved object; in fact the beloved object may be love itself and not a specific beloved. Al-Dabbâgh, on the other hand, speaks of the beloved's impact on the lover, and stresses the effect of the lover's thinking about the beloved. Al-Ghazâlî emphasizes the element of will and desire to reach the beloved, whereas al-Dabbâgh emphasizes a certain feeling of the lover. Neither definition conveys the full meaning of love, if it is possible at all to perceive this meaning because, for example, just as love does not incline one toward what gives pleasure, it also does not always makes one joyful. In the case of divine love the contrary can be sometimes stated; one loves God although his love gives neither pleasure nor joy. Al-Dabbâgh's definition can be absolutely justified only if love is bestowed on the lover with its delightful results, but not when love is the result of the lover's own efforts.

## 2. The human aspect in the love for God

According to al-Dabbâgh, what prevents a man from attaining perfection of perception and the pleasure derived from this perception in the present world is the screen of the human body and dealing with bodily needs. In death connections with material things end and hence perception



becomes more perfect than before.<sup>13</sup> Here al-Dabbâgh is clearly influenced by al-Ghazâlî's notion concerning the direct relation between the afterworld and this world with reference to man's salvation. He uses al-Ghazâlî's comparison between seeing and imagining which parallels the knowledge a man attains in the world to come and the knowledge he attains in this world, respectively. Employing almost the same words as al-Ghazâlî, he says: 'If the knowledge which a man achieves in this world is the very knowledge which brings him to see God in the afterworld, then, whoever does not know God (the Truth, *al-haqq*) in this world and has no pleasure because of his knowledge and no love for Him, will neither see Him in the world to come nor have pleasure on account of his seeing.'<sup>14</sup>

Al-Dabbâgh explains how differences between human souls regarding attraction to materiality come about. The essence of all the holy and divine souls is one (*jawhar al-nufûs al-qudsiyya al-ilâhiyya kullihâ wâhid*). However, since the disposition (*isti'dâd*) of each animal faculty is different because of the temperament of its body (*mizâj al-jism*), which is balanced or unbalanced, God gives each body a soul which fits its disposition.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, the soul may be perfect or imperfect, strong or weak. Light serves as an instance illustrating the divergence of souls. Light is a genus whose influence on the lighted bodies depends on their different states.<sup>16</sup> Now, if there were two persons whose disposition is one and accordingly God created the same soul for each of them, their knowledge would be exactly the same, duality would disappear, and unity would exist, which is impossible. What is reasonable is extreme proximity between the two persons derived from their affinity (*munâsaba*). Al-Dabbâgh points out that affinity obliges love, and that love is strengthened in accordance with the measure of affinity and can reach such an extent that the lover observes no difference between

him and his beloved. In this state a person thinks that his perception of his beloved is the same perception of his own essence, and this is the meaning of unity. In the final analysis, affinity depends on the temperament of the body, but al-Dabbâgh admits that it can also be achieved through ascetic practice (*riyâda*).<sup>17</sup> Possibly he means to impart that when material impediments are removed, human beings share the same divine features.

Following the common Şûfîc division of the soul,<sup>18</sup> al-Dabbâgh states that souls are divided into three kinds: a. Souls that by their disposition turn only to God. These are the souls of the prophets and pure persons (*aşfiyâ*), called *al-muṭma'inna* (the souls at peace).<sup>19</sup> The reason for this appellation is very probably the absence of striving against desire which characterizes these souls. b. Souls which absolutely deviate from God, thus these constitute the polar opposite of the first kind. Such souls are dominated by love for sensual objects and bodily desires, because the imagination (*wahm*) exerts control over them.<sup>20</sup> The souls of such persons, whom al-Dabbâgh calls 'the unhappy' (*ashqiyâ*), deny spiritual pleasures and intellectual perception, and hence are veiled from God. He names this kind of souls *al-ammâra* (the soul which commands [evil]).<sup>21</sup> c. The last kind of souls stands halfway between the two preceding kinds. These souls love sensual objects moderately, and so their power retains a keenness of mind by which they perceive intellectual pleasure. These are called the blaming souls (*al-lawwâma*).<sup>22</sup> Although they are veiled from many divine truths, they can be purified through ascetic practice and join the rank of the happy persons (*al-su'adâ*). Degrees of 'walking on the path' (*sulûk*)<sup>23</sup> were established only for people who have such souls, for the first kind of people are initially endowed with the ability to perceive God, while the second kind of people are predestined to unhappiness. The souls of the third kind are like unpolished mirrors



which can still be cleansed. The goal of this work, says al-Dabbâgh is to describe the modality of *sulûk* for those people.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, his first chapter is entitled: 'On the way which brings the pure souls to the true love.' Here lies one of the important differences between al-Ghazâlî and al-Dabbâgh. While the former emphasizes the intellectual activity and seems to turn to the intellectual élite, the latter seems to turn to the majority of people emphasizing the moral side of ascetic practice.

The beginning of chapter one brings us immediately into the heart of the matter: 'Know that the loftiest thing in existence is the eternal felicity (*al-sa'âda al-abadiyya*). One cannot reach this felicity but through love for God with all one's heart without associating (*min ghayr shirk*) someone else with one's love. What brings a man to any love is his knowledge of the perfection of the beloved and his beauty (*kamâl al-mahbûb wa-jamâluhu*), for whoever does not know, does not love.'<sup>25</sup> The line which connects the points of knowledge, love and eternal felicity is obviously reminiscent of al-Ghazâlî. We have also encountered the notion of the totality of love in al-Ghazâlî's theory. The perfection and beauty of the beloved as causes of love are also principal ideas in al-Dabbâgh. Whenever the beloved has absolute qualities of beauty and the lover attains perfect knowledge of these qualities, love arises as a necessary consequence. This is God's law (*sunna*). Indeed, knowledge precedes love because it is the latter's cause, but love precedes knowledge in its high rank, because it is the goal of knowledge. However, this relation between knowledge and love changes; when knowledge is perfect and love follows it, love exerts influence on knowledge and vice versa. Now, the state of the lover and the state of the knower are identical, thus there is no difference in rank between them. The knower's love and the lover's knowledge become united.<sup>26</sup> That love has an impact on knowledge is a notion which does not appear in al-Ghazâlî

who emphasizes the role of knowledge on the development of love, but omits the possibility of a reverse process.<sup>27</sup>

Since knowledge does not exist initially in man – because in most people, imaginations (*awhâm*)<sup>28</sup> are firmly rooted from the beginning of their life – it is attained through observation and inference from the divine production, for production necessarily proves the existence of a producer (*inna al-ṣan'a dâlla 'alâ ṣani'ihâ bi'l-ḍarûra*). Whoever walks on the way (*al-sâlik*) should examine the signs of the wonderful phenomena (*âthâr 'ajâ'ib al-ṣan'a*) in the world which demonstrate the perfection of their Producer and His beauty and glory. As we have seen in al-Ghazâlî, this is the argument from design through which a man learns about the world and its maker. Al-Dabbâgh notes that this is the gate leading to knowledge, just as we know about a hidden scholar through his works.<sup>29</sup> However, he continues this course of thought stating that the loftiest of God's productions, which serves as the most manifest proof of Him, is the world of man on whom God bestows the soul which is described as light. The human soul belongs to the world of divine command (*'âlam al-amr*)<sup>30</sup> and proves God's existence. The proof of the soul's highest rank is that God ascribes the soul to Himself, saying, 'Say: The spirit derives from my God's command' (Qur'ân 17.85) and 'I have breathed My spirit in him' (Qur'ân 15.29).<sup>31</sup> To these verses, Muḥammad's statement which is actually the delphic maxim 'Whoever knows his soul (or himself) knows his Lord' (*man 'arafa nafsahu 'arafa rabbahu*) is added.<sup>32</sup> This maxim is connected, in al-Dabbâgh's view, with the micro-macrocosm motif, according to which man is a little picture of the world,<sup>33</sup> meaning that he includes within himself all the faculties contained in the world, whether material or spiritual. Man's soul is neither a pure body (*jism ṣarf*) nor pure spirituality (*rûḥâniyya mujarrada*); it is one essence which contains the sensual



and spiritual phenomena, and therefore it can reflect all kinds of phenomena. Through its spiritual part it contacts (*muttaṣil*) with the highest world, the world of the divine lights and the holy beauty. Like al-Ghazâlî, al-Dabbâgh speaks of two kinds of received knowledge, the first through purification of the soul, a purification which makes the soul fit to receive the lights (= knowledge) of God, and the second, through reflection. Reflection is based on the perception of the senses which create necessary pieces of knowledge which are needed to establish proofs. If the soul thinks about what exists within itself, it attains knowledge of all its faculties. This knowledge gives it pleasure which exceeds the pleasure gained through the senses and which causes it to long for perfection of this kind of knowledge.<sup>34</sup> Thus pleasure gained through knowledge serves as a motivation to perfect the knowledge. Unlike al-Ghazâlî, who explains man's attraction to beauty only by the pleasure beauty gives, al-Dabbâgh, very probably following Platonic and Neoplatonic notions, explains this attraction as deriving from and being strengthened by a characteristic found in the soul which makes it love beauty. This feature is called by al-Dabbâgh 'a secret posited in the souls.' Contrary to al-Ghazâlî, according to al-Dabbâgh, a body is not beautiful only because it has the perfections which are fitted to it, but when a body is well composed, the world of beauty (the idea of beauty) radiates its lights on the beloved object thus making the latter beautiful. Thus while al-Ghazâlî's conception of beauty is natural, al-Dabbâgh's conception of beauty is a mixture of natural and transcendent elements.<sup>35</sup> We shall return later to his conception of beauty.

The author now turns to a detailed elucidation of the connection between the perception of partial beauty (*jamâl juz'î*) and the perception of universal beauty (*jamâl kullî*). As we shall see, beauty is divided into two main parts:

a. absolute beauty (*jamâl muṭlaq*) which applies only to God;<sup>36</sup> and b. limited beauty (*jamâl muqayyad*) which in turn is divided into two parts: a. universal beauty (*jamâl kullî*); and b. partial beauty (*jamâl juz'î*). Universal beauty emanates from God and penetrates all existents, while partial beauty is perceived in bodies.<sup>37</sup> According to al-Dabbâgh's first principle, through the senses the soul acquires pieces of knowledge from outside which make its essence perfect. Partial beauty is thus perceived by the sense of sight which transmits the form perceived to the imaginative faculty (*al-khayâl*). This form is impressed in the imagination in accordance with the latter's purity and being free from defects. If the soul has an interest in this form, the form will be retained in the retentive faculty (*al-ḥâfiẓa*), otherwise it will perish. By the cogitative faculty (*al-quwwa al-mufakkira*)<sup>38</sup> the soul observes and seeks for the forms. In doing this the soul is like a mirror which faces another mirror on which many different forms are seen. All the forms on the first mirror are reflected on the second one.<sup>39</sup> However, a part of these forms disappear on account of the weakness of the retentive faculty, and the soul continues to look for them through the cogitative faculty until it acquires them from its hidden world (*'âlam ghaybiḥâ*), and not from outside.<sup>40</sup> Whenever the form posited in the imaginative faculty fits (*nâsaba*) the soul,<sup>41</sup> the cogitative faculty acts on this form stripping from it its bodily accidents and hence deriving its spiritual meaning. This is the beauty which is stripped of the material accidents (*al-jamâl al-mujarrad 'an 'alâ'iq al-jism*), and it is compatible with the spiritual side of the soul (lit. the soul which is stripped of its material aspects – *al-nafs al-mujarrada*). The stripped form is impressed in the perceiving soul (*al-nafs al-mudrika*),<sup>42</sup> because of this affinity, and thus a strong connection occurs between the soul and this form, for the soul perceives beauty stripped of its material accidents in its essence (*bi-dhâtiḥâ*) and



through its essence (*li-dhâtiḥâ*) without the need for something from outside. Then the spirituality of the form impressed in the soul does not cease to increase, until the soul is united with the form in a rational unity (*ittiḥâd 'aqlî*), because the soul is able, for the sake of its perception, to dispense with the form's bodily accidents, and because of its knowledge that this is the true form of the beloved. Since the soul perceives spiritual forms (*ṣuwar rūḥâniyya*) without needing to turn to the senses, and since it knows that what it perceives is a trace of the divine world (*al-'âlam al-'uluwwî*), it longs for an absolute perception of its objects. In this phase, the soul is ready to receive the universal beauty from the divine world. The pleasure derived from the perception of the universal beauty exceeds the pleasure derived from the perception of human bodies, although each beautiful entity, whether its beauty is partial or universal, is beloved due to its being a trace of the beloved divine world. The genus of both kinds of beauty is one, and the difference between them lies in their power and weakness which are necessitated by their different substrates; external beauty is perceived by the senses and the bodily faculties, while internal beauty is perceived by the essence of the soul with the assistance of the divine world.<sup>43</sup>

In fine, says al-Dabbâgh, there are three stages of perception: a. The sensual perception which means the perception of the form by the sense of sight without the intervention of the imagination. This is the weakest perception and the most remote from true pleasure; b. the imaginative perception which denotes the stable existence of the beloved's form in the imagination; and c. the rational perception which is the transmission of the beloved's form into the essence of the soul when material accidents (*'awâriḍ*) are removed. This is true perception and the noblest thing to be sought after. The author also calls it the universal conjunction (*al-ittiṣâl al-kullî*), which may be

interpreted to mean the connection with the universal beauty. The three stages of perception are characterized by their duration. The first disappears quickly, the second continues to exist for a long time but its disappearance is something conceivable, and the third continues to exist so long as the essence continues to exist.<sup>44</sup> It is worth noting that the whole process resembles cogitation as understood by some philosophers. Cogitation begins with sense perception and continues with the abstraction of the objects of the sensual perception from their material accidents thus creating spiritual forms. Al-Fârâbî makes a distinction between two kinds of intelligibles: a. those which are abstracted from matter; and b. those which are not the result of abstraction; by virtue of their nature these are immaterial, transcendent and everlasting.<sup>45</sup>

As we have seen, the precondition for true perception of beauty and hence for love is the removal of material impediments from man's soul. However, the reverse process is, according to al-Dabbâgh, also possible; if a human being perceives the beauty of another human being with perception deprived of material accidents, he has spiritual pleasure which removes from him most of his bodily desires. Therefore the love for perfection deprives the lover of the pleasures of eating, drinking, and sleeping, all necessary things for physical well-being. The spiritual pleasure diverts the soul from the knowledge of the despised pleasures which it misses. Moreover, all the soul's faculties which serve it to reach different kinds of sensual pleasures, now are united to serve the love for the most sublime essence. What al-Dabbâgh actually says is that the same powers which lead a man to love a sensual pleasure can help him to love spiritual things. Now the soul is motivated to long for the completion of unity with the beloved. This unity means near affinity (*qurb al-munâsaba*) between two souls so that the lover does not consider his essence different from the beloved's essence. Like



al-Ghazâlî, al-Dabbâgh does not deem the unity between the lover and the beloved a unity of place, but rather a unity of affinity. Affinity makes souls come close to one another, and absence of affinity makes them remote from one another.<sup>46</sup> In sum, the process of love for God begins with the creation of the conditions for the penetration of the universal beauty into man's soul and ends with the union of this beauty with man's soul.

### 3. The emanative aspect in the love for God

In al-Dabbâgh's view, the bestowal of love progresses in a series of emanations. God bestows on the world existence, life, beauty, and perfection all of which are expressed by the metaphor of His holy light (*al-nûr al-qudsî*).<sup>47</sup> First the holy light illuminates the rational knowing essences (*al-dhawât al-'âqila al-'ârifa*) which are the honored angels (*al-malâ'ika al-mukramûn*).<sup>48</sup> On account of this illumination, they have strong joy which is multiplied whenever they imagine the beauty and perfection they attain. However, the angels are not able to absolutely perceive the perfection of this light, they feel as if they are nonexistent when the light exists and imperfect in relation to the perfection of the light. Their joy is therefore mingled with their feeling of being overcome by the light. This blend of joy and being overcome constitutes the description of love. In the second phase, these essences take the form of the divine light to such an extent that they become light out of love for themselves and for their creator.<sup>49</sup> The angels' love for themselves derives from the existence of the divine love in their essences. Because of the divine light, the angels are like illuminating lamps which are loved by those who are beneath them (*ma'shûqa li-man dūnahâ*). In the third phase, the light passes from the angels to the world of human souls. The latter are like glass which receives light

due to its limpidity. When the human souls perceive this light they have joy and they love the light because they become united with it. The souls throw the light of their beauty on their bodies. But unlike the angels which receive light and cast it over others, the bodies do not take the form of light, meaning that light does not become a part of their essence, therefore, in bodies light is accidental and not essential; if light ceases to illuminate them they remain dark. It is worth noting that this light necessitates love, hence, bodies are not beloved, for light is not essentially inherent in them.<sup>50</sup> Al-Dabbâgh describes the process of love as a series of emanations beginning with the First Light and ending with human bodies. Each substance in the hierarchy receives light from the substance above it. The light becomes an essential part of each substance, thus enabling the light to be delivered to the substance beneath it. The last substance which receives light is the human soul which in turn passes its light to the body. Al-Dabbâgh ends this section with a poem<sup>51</sup> which reads:

If you want to reveal the secret of all creatures/  
make your soul perfect through love for the beauty  
of Being.

For the soul is like a mirror; if it is clear/ it shows  
you the beauty of the whole imprinted in it.

And if you strip the beauty of a shadow coming  
close to it/ you will perceive beauty in yourself  
rising in the horizon of the soul.

If you experience beauty in yourself and ignore  
others than yourself, you will find/ in your essence  
the meanings all things being joined.<sup>52</sup>

In al-Dabbâgh's view, there is a connection between the understanding of a part of the explanation of the reality of love, as stated above, and the secret of the meaning of the light verse (Qur'ân 24.35). This verse serves many Sûfis to



elucidate their mystical notions.<sup>53</sup> It reads: 'God is the Light of the heavens and the earth; the likeness of His light is as niche wherein is a lamp (the lamp in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star) kindled from a Blessed Tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West whose oil well nigh would shine, even if no fire touched it; Light upon Light; (God guides to His Light whom He will.) (And God strikes similitudes for men, and God has knowledge of everything).'<sup>54</sup> The verse is explained in accordance with the idea expressed above. God is the light of the heavens and the earth. He has neither likeness nor equal, for all things derive from Him. The rational essences, that is, the angels which are near God, are symbolized by the lamp, for the lamp illuminates and is illuminated (*munîra mustanîra*), the human knowing soul by the glass, because of its limpidity and reception of light from others, and the human body by the niche, for light is reflected in it. The oil symbolizes love, for through the oil all lamps are kindled. The oil is extracted from the Blessed Tree which is the symbol of knowledge. Just as this tree is neither of the east nor of the west, meaning without a specific direction, so the object of knowledge has no specific direction. The author here alludes to God who cannot be said to be in a specific direction, for He is not a body.<sup>55</sup> The oil which is the best fruit of this tree almost illuminates, because of its great purity, even if no fire touches it, that is, it illuminates even if it does not extract light from another. If the holy light shines on the oil, it will be light on light.<sup>56</sup> Al-Dabbâgh reiterates the notion that love derives from knowledge. Love can be achieved through man's efforts, that is, his knowledge, and by the illumination of God's light on him. Since love characterizes the rational essences, inanimate things and even animate things whose light is not essential cannot be described as lovers.

The last notion is now explained in detail. God's divine light is one, but the impressions (*âthâruhu*) it makes on

entities differ because of the differences in the entities. There is a hierarchy of entities; the perfect knowing entities receive existence, life, knowledge, love, and beauty from the divine light. Although al-Dabbâgh does not name the object of this reception, it is clear from the preceding paragraphs that these entities are the angels from whom the light passes to human souls, which are also called knowing entities, but not perfect ones. Now, bodies which the knowing souls direct, namely, human bodies, receive only existence, life, and beauty. Bodies which receive only existence and beauty are those of animals and plants.<sup>57</sup> Inanimate things, which are essentially dark, receive only existence from the divine light. A spark of the light which causes existence (*al-nûr al-wujûdî* lit. the existential light) makes these things appear from the darkness of absence. The author ascribes great importance to the love which God bestows on man. This love makes man perfect. His nearness to God is established by the portion of love he receives. There is no other motive which causes man to ascend to the worlds of light except for love, the loftiest means to attain perfection.<sup>58</sup> Although al-Dabbâgh stresses the giving of light, one should not ignore the notion that light is given according to the qualities of the receiver, so that one may conclude that in as much as a man attains more knowledge, he will receive more divine light.

Al-Dabbâgh brings forward the view of one of the scholars concerning love. According to this scholar, who is undoubtedly Ibn Sînâ,<sup>59</sup> love is a quality existing in all entities whether animate or inanimate, for the light through which it appears exists in all the existents. All beings, including motions, derive their existence from love. Even the fearful person moves because he loves to be rescued. Beings are different in the share of love subsisting in them. Disagreeing with this view, al-Dabbâgh reiterates his view that love exists only among those beings which have souls.



He explains that the attraction between inanimate things, such as a magnet and iron, is a result of the qualities God created in them, not a result of spiritual causes.<sup>60</sup>

After dealing with universal love (*al-maḥabba al-kulliyya*), the love which exists in all those who have souls, al-Dabbâgh now turns to deal with partial love (*al-maḥabba al-juz'iyya*), namely, the love of the human beings. This love is mingled with pain, for one of the requisites of love is longing for the beloved which stirs up the soul to seek perfection of perception and complete pleasure. Hence love is 'suffering in pleasure' (*'adhâb fî na'îm*) and pleasure mingled with domination.<sup>61</sup> Whenever the pleasure of love becomes great, the lover's suffering disappears and is effaced – just as the light of a lamp is effaced in the sun's light – especially when witnessing (*mushâhada*) occurs. By this term al-Dabbâgh means the state in which the lover witnesses the presence of God and feels unity with Him.<sup>62</sup>

Very probably following al-Ghazâlî,<sup>63</sup> al-Dabbâgh expresses the idea that the process of love is infinite. That is because what is revealed from the beloved has no end, and the lover longs to perceive more and more about his beloved, for every piece of knowledge about the beloved brings the lover more pleasure. Also here the lover is not only delighted by looking at the beauty of his beloved, but also suffers due to his longing for attaining the perfection of perception.<sup>64</sup> Al-Dabbâgh states that the pleasure of witnessing depends on the measure of the perfection of perception, and the latter depends on three changeable factors: a. the object perceived (*al-mudrak*); b. the perceiver (*al-mudrik*); and c. the perception (*al-idrâk*). These factors have different degrees of perfection and imperfection. The object perceived means the qualities of the beloved; in as much as these qualities are perfect and beautiful, so the *mushâhada* becomes perfect. As for the perceiver, the lover, his pleasure of witnessing the beloved depends on

the intensity of his longing for the beloved. By perception the author means the state in which the lover sees his beloved. His pleasure at seeing his beloved midday in clear air as though there is no veil to impair his experience is more perfect than seeing him on a cloudy day, as if behind a screen.<sup>65</sup> Al-Dabbâgh does not indicate what he means by veil. As we have seen in al-Ghazâlî the veil represents man's passions and attachment to sensual pleasures.<sup>66</sup>

#### 4. Perfection, beauty, and pleasure

Al-Dabbâgh considers the explanation of the love for beauty and perfection as his principal goal and the fourth chapter of his book is devoted to this objective.<sup>67</sup> Generally he follows al-Ghazâlî in defining beauty and perfection and in seeking the connection between the two. However, there are significant differences in the two scholars' positions mainly in placing the origin of beauty and in formulating and arranging the materials. Al-Dabbâgh's point of departure is perfection which is deemed by him a secret in the existence of beauty (*sirr fî wujûd al-jamâl*). Here 'secret' (= perfection) seems to denote the key to understanding beauty. He defines perfection as 'the presence (*ḥuḍûr*) of all the praiseworthy qualities of a thing.'<sup>68</sup> However, a few lines later he comes close to al-Ghazâlî when stating that the perfection of each thing is according to what befits it (*mâ yalîqu bihi*). To repeat, in al-Ghazâlî beauty is defined as 'the presence of perfections which are possible and befitting for a certain object.'<sup>69</sup> Finally, there is no difference between the thinkers, for al-Dabbâgh, who brings al-Ghazâlî's examples (the horse), regards perfection as what shows beauty. Perfection, in al-Dabbâgh's presentation, is divided into external and internal. External perfection means the aggregation of the good qualities of bodies which befit them. Each body has different qualities



of perfection. By nature, due to an affinity between the human soul and symmetry and purity, man loves beautiful forms which are devoid of imperfections. Probably because of the role of music in *Şûfîsm*<sup>70</sup> and its great influence on man's feeling and acts, al-Dabbâgh, discusses music in this context as an example of external perfection. External perfection involves the senses which in the case of music is the sense of hearing. When the sounds produced are rhythmically balanced music is perfect and hence beautiful. Human beings incline to hear music and to be delighted by it, on account of its beauty and its effect on their sensations. Actually, in al-Dabbâgh's view, love for beautiful forms is characterized by love for a thing by virtue of itself, although it can be argued that, for example, love for music is love for the sake of getting benefit, which takes the form of change of feeling or motivation to act. But it can also be argued that love for beautiful things does not serve any end.<sup>71</sup>

Love for objects and hence the pleasure derived from love is linked to the kinds of souls. Souls are divided into three kinds: a. vegetative soul (*al-nafs al-nabâtiyya*); b. animal soul (*al-nafs al-ḥayawâniyya*); and c. human soul (*al-nafs al-insâniyya*).<sup>72</sup> The pleasure of the vegetative soul derives from eating and drinking, the pleasure of the animal soul derives from sexual intercourse and acts which are necessitated by anger, such as taking revenge and leading, and the pleasure of the divine soul (the human soul) derives from attaining divine knowledge, coming close to God, and love for Him. Since the faculties of the soul are different, the pleasures of man are also different. Moreover, the same pleasure, for instance sexual intercourse, may be caused by different motives. One person wants a child, and another just wants pleasure, while the gnostic uses this pleasure as a stepping stone to understand other pleasures which have spiritual affinity. In the last instance, this pleasure stops being external and becomes

one of the perfections. Here al-Dabbâgh makes an important note: Looking at beautiful forms, such as flowers, does not always indicate love for the beautiful forms by virtue of themselves, but love for the sake of pleasure. It follows that beautiful forms are loved both by virtue of themselves and because they serve as a means to attain pleasure.<sup>73</sup>

Internal perfection is defined as follows: 'The internal perfection means the sum of the excellent virtues in man when they are balanced and impressed in him.'<sup>74</sup> Like al-Ghazâlî, he enumerates these virtues, but unlike his predecessor, he regards some of them, that is wisdom (*ḥikma*), chastity (*'iffa*), bravery (*shajâ'a*), and justice (*'adâla*) as the foundations (*ummahât*) from which all the other virtues branch off.<sup>75</sup> Thus, from wisdom, the excellent virtue of the intellectual faculty, stem good management and right opinion, from bravery, the excellent virtue of the faculty of anger, patience and sobriety, and from chastity, the excellent virtue of the faculty of desire, shame and generosity. (I brought forward only examples of al-Dabbâgh's list.) Justice means that all these faculties act in keeping with necessary order (*tartîb wâjib*). The author ascribes great importance to justice, for he includes in it all the excellent virtues on which the existence of the whole world is based. When all the excellent virtues are joined in an individual, he is perfect. The virtues themselves are perfect when they are balanced. Al-Dabbâgh does not explain what he means by the balance of virtues, but only points out that the virtues are balanced when they operate in accordance with the Law.<sup>76</sup> It is the Law which make one's virtues perfect, as the Prophet said: 'I was sent to make the noble virtues perfect.' Like al-Ghazâlî, al-Dabbâgh states that the sum of these perfections originates in the perfection of knowledge and power, meaning the knowledge of the excellence of these virtues and the power to employ them.<sup>77</sup>



As we have seen, al-Dabbâgh divides beauty into absolute or unlimited (*muṭlaq*), and limited (*muqayyad*). Like al-Ghazâlî, he applies the name 'the absolute beautiful' to God.<sup>78</sup> Only God deserves absolute beauty, and no one shares it with Him. There is no way to liken this beauty to any other, to describe its modality, or to know its essence. God alone can perceive it. Man's perception of God means his inability to perceive Him.<sup>79</sup> Up to this point al-Dabbâgh follows in al-Ghazâlî's footsteps, but he advances to elaborate on the theme of beauty in a Neoplatonic fashion.

Limited beauty has two parts, the universal (*kullî*) and the partial (*juzî*). The universal beauty is depicted as 'a holy light emanating (*fâ'id*) from the beauty of the divine presence and penetrating into all existents.' First this light radiates on the world of the divine kingdom (*âlam al-malakût*), then on the world of power (*âlam al-jabarût*),<sup>80</sup> which is the world of the human souls, then on the animal and vegetative faculties, and then on all the bodies of the lower world. Each tiny particle receives the divine beauty according to its receptive ability and in consonance with the measure of God's eternal Providence (*al-'inâya al-azaliyya*). This light is not only the cause of the manifestation (*zuhûr*) of things to the senses, but also the cause of their existence: 'If one assumed the nonexistence of the universal light, there would be no existent in the world.'<sup>81</sup> As a cause of manifestation the universal light is compared to the light of the sun by which one sees things. Just as nothing is free of the sunlight, so no existent is free of the universal light. Likewise, just as only one whose sense of sight is perfect perceives things in a perfect form, so only one whose essence is universal (*dhât kulliyya*) truly perceives the universal beauty, and one whose essence is partial, perceives only the partial beauty. By 'one whose essence is universal' (*al-kullî al-dhât*) al-Dabbâgh means one whose essence fits all essences so that one is identical to

all essences. This identity is explained by their (namely the gnostic and all essences) sharing of the divine light. One whose essence is universal considers all things nonexistent unless they receive the divine light. Actually he sees only the divine light which pervades everything and causes its existence, so that it is all things, and all things are it. In the last phase, he passes away (*yafnâ*) from all things by seeing the Producer of all things. This state is true only to whoever God is his hearing and seeing (*kâna al-ḥaqq sam'ahu wa-baṣarahu*),<sup>82</sup> meaning that he understands, or more accurately is aware of this state, only when God's faculties act on him. Al-Dabbâgh's wording: 'Only one who is the whole perceives (lit. witnesses) the whole' (*lâ yashhadu al-kull illâ al-kull*)<sup>83</sup> might allude to the possibility that the author believes in an ontological unity between God and man. However, in the light of other passages in his treatise, al-Dabbâgh seems to say that when man is stripped of his material elements, in the state of annihilation, his soul as a divine entity can perceive 'the whole', that is, the unity of all things. This is a subjective awareness of the mystic. The whole process is reminiscent of al-Ghazâlî's third and fourth phases of believing in God's unity. In the third phase the believer, who is still aware of his own essence, sees many things but considers them as originating in God, and in the fourth phase he passes away from being aware of himself and sees only God. Al-Ghazâlî calls this state *al-fanâ fî'l-tawḥîd*.<sup>84</sup> However, al-Ghazâlî neither states that God is man's hearing and seeing nor that this state is attained through mystical experience (*dhawq*), as does al-Dabbâgh.<sup>85</sup> As I have stated in the article mentioned in note 82, al-Ghazâlî seems to regard the fourth stage as reachable through intellectual efforts and not through mystical experience. It can be suggested that al-Dabbâgh takes the framework of al-Ghazâlî's discussion of believing in God's unity and reformulates it according to his theory of beauty, stressing the element of mystical experience,



although he states that the universal beauty is attained through the light of the intellect.<sup>86</sup>

The perception of the partial beauty is also caused by an external force designated by al-Dabbâgh 'heavenly light' (*nûr 'uluwwiyy*) or the light of the intellect (*nûr al-'aql*).<sup>87</sup> He describes the process of perception as follows: When a man sees a beautiful form, the sense of sight, which belongs to the faculties of the animal soul and hence is material, engraves it on the tablet of the imagination (*lawḥ al-khayâl*). What the sense of sight perceives is only the external appearance of beauty (*mazḥar al-jamâl*), not its essence. At this moment, the moment at which the form is imprinted in the imagination, the heavenly light penetrates the human soul and causes it to perceive the beauty devoid of its materiality, and hence to be joyful. By this joy the human soul is ready to accept the radiation of another light from the world of the holy lights (*'âlam al-anwâr al-qudsiyya*) which is more spiritual than the first light. That is because there is an affinity between these two kinds of light, and therefore the first light calls the second. In other words, al-Dabbâgh states that 'the intellect is light and the beauty is light, and light can be perceived only by light.' It is this joy called love which brings about passionate love (*'ishq*). In the last analysis, the heavenly light causes love, meaning that it exercises influence on the human soul, for only a spiritual element (light) can affect another spiritual element (soul). The mere perception of the sense of sight (a material element) cannot cause joy and hence love. To put it in al-Dabbâgh's words: 'The thick (*al-kathîf*) cannot have an effect on the fine (*al-laṭîf*).'<sup>88</sup>

We have seen that the first condition for perceiving beauty is the activity of the sense of sight. This sense and others make man know things, and hence have pleasure in them. Therefore, one cannot describe the pleasure of seeing to one who lacks the sense of sight. Likewise, it is

impossible to explain the pleasure of sexual intercourse to the eunuch. Thus the intellectual pleasure in beauty cannot be perceived by the blind.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, the external beauty, notwithstanding its connection to the external dimension of the body, does not inhere in the body; the beauty of a body is the manifestation of its soul and the radiation of lights of beauty on the body.<sup>90</sup> Consequently, a dead body, even with perfect form, but without the illumination of the light of the soul, does not affect the soul of a perceiver.

To sum up, although the first condition for perception of external beauty is the sense of sight, the whole process after seeing is depicted in terms of spirituality. Even the perfect characteristics of a form, would not yield beauty without the spiritual element of what al-Dabbâgh calls 'the lights of beauty.' Also the reception of beauty by the perceiver is based on the spiritual element of the light of the intellect. It seems to me that in the background of al-Dabbâgh's presentation lies the Platonic theory of Ideas or Forms blended with the Neoplatonic theory of emanation. The essence of beauty is regarded as the universal and spiritual subsistent devoid of beautiful particulars. This is proved by al-Dabbâgh's contention that beauty does not inhere in the body. The Platonic notion that the One is the source of Forms and the Neoplatonic notion of emanation is expressed in al-Dabbâgh in the statement that 'the universal beauty is a holy light which emanates from the beauty of the divine presence and permeates all the existents.'<sup>91</sup> Also the Platonic notion that the soul ascends to the true beauty through beautiful bodies is introduced here.<sup>92</sup>

In principle the internal beauty is created like the external beauty; the divine lights illuminate the pure human intellect causing it to have religious objects of knowledge and divine secrets and in turn the latter bring the human soul to the true love of God. The soul must be



free from natural impurity, which in al-Dabbâgh's doctrine means inclination to material values. As a result of the effect of God's lights, the soul has a joy and pleasure which cannot be compared to the pleasure attained by the senses, for the pleasure of the senses is obtained by their perfection which belongs to the animal soul, the faculty of the body. Like al-Ghazâlî, al-Dabbâgh states that just as the pleasure derived from overcoming one's enemies is greater than the pleasure derived from eating and drinking, so the pleasure derived from the beauty of the intellect is greater than any pleasure derived either from the senses or from the faculties of the animal soul. In as much as man's intellect is perfect, he is more inclined to receive spiritual forms than material forms. This is conditioned by the soul's state of balance and absence of delusive imaginations (*awhâm*). That is because when such imaginations gain mastery, they unbalance the soul and, hence, incline it toward the pleasure of the body. This state resembles the state of an ill person whose temperament (*mizâj*) is disturbed to such an extent that he does not have pleasure in pleasant things and does not abstain from unpleasant ones. Likewise, whoever denies the pleasure of the intellect, lacks insight, and whoever denies the beauty of the bodily forms, lacks the sense of sight.<sup>93</sup>

In most people the internal beauty has no great effect, whereas the external beauty does have great effect. Al-Dabbâgh explains that this phenomenon has its origin in the fact that external beauty is attained through the senses which are in each animal, whether rational or irrational. Even internal senses exist in animals, except for the faculty of reflection (*fikr*).<sup>94</sup> However, intellectual beauty is obtained only through the purity of the divine intellect (*ṣafâ' al-'aql al-ilâhî*) which not all the people possess. Consequently, only few people perceive this beauty and have pleasure in it which the perceiver of external beauty cannot have. Therefore, there are people

who love prophets, scholars, and men of virtues, because they observe in the latter perfect qualities.<sup>95</sup> Their love sometimes causes them to spend their money and even to sacrifice their lives for the sake of these people. In as much as the intellectual capacity of men increases, so their love for the virtuous people increases.

Among the perfect virtues which cause people to love their owners, al-Dabbâgh emphasizes the role of knowledge. 'The soul loves its objects of knowledge be they noble or ignoble.'<sup>96</sup> The pleasure derived from knowledge depends on the level of the object of knowledge. In as much as the object is nobler, the pleasure is greater. As in many places also here the contents and even the examples are al-Ghazâlî's. For example, al-Dabbâgh says that even one who knows how to play chess has joy in his knowledge. His pleasure in playing the game diverts him from eating and drinking, and he feels sorrow if one ascribes to him inability to play well.<sup>97</sup> Likewise, the hierarchy of the objects of knowledge, concerning dominion, beginning with the knowledge of the ruler of a country (in al-Dabbâgh and in al-Ghazâlî the mayor of a city) and ending in both writers with God, the ruler of the cosmos, is taken from al-Ghazâlî whose description here is more detailed.<sup>98</sup>

### 5. Affinity as a cause of love

Also like al-Ghazâlî, al-Dabbâgh discusses the unknown affinity between the lover and the beloved. This affinity is defined as 'the existence of a special quality in the beloved which befits its counterpart in the lover and causes the latter to love.' Just as the attraction<sup>99</sup> between a magnet and a piece of iron is too delicate to be understood by the human intellect, so this love is too delicate to be understood by the human intellect.<sup>100</sup> The proof for this phenomenon



is, in al-Dabbâgh's view, the fact that we frequently see passionate love between lovers, and we do not know the external cause of their love. That is because the causes which enjoin love are known; they are the benefaction of the beloved toward the lover or the perfection expressed through either external or internal beauty. However, this kind of love has no known cause. The author rejects the view of the astrologers (*ahl al-tanjîm*) that the cause of such a love is a similar arrangement of stars on the lovers' birthdays, claiming that it is a contention without proof.<sup>101</sup>

Al-Dabbâgh cites the tradition appearing in the *Ihyâ'*: 'Spirits are regimented battalions: those which know one another (*ta'ârafa*) associate familiarity together, while those which do not know one another (*tanâkara*) remain at variance.' Like al-Ghazâlî,<sup>102</sup> by 'regimented battalions' he means species and kinds, and by *ta'âruf*, affinity. Naturally, when he speaks of affinity between species and kinds, the cause of love is known. For example, the inclination of a scholar to another derives from the characteristic of knowledge inherent in them. Likewise people who share the same profession tend to associate with one another. Affinity exists not only essentially, but also accidentally. Thus an ill person associates with another ill person.<sup>103</sup> In this context al-Dabbâgh mentions the view of a philosopher (Ibn Sînâ?) who states that 'each substance (*jawhar*) in the heavenly and in the terrestrial worlds is either lover (*'âshiq*) or beloved (*ma'shûq*). 'Âshiq loves what is above it and is beloved by what is beneath it. Also the motion of the sphere, says al-Dabbâgh, is according to this view caused by love.<sup>104</sup>

As in other cases, our author does not content himself with putting forth the notion of affinity, but attempts to explain it. What makes affinity exert its influence on love is the soul. Each genus or species has a soul which causes it to act. This accounts for the diversification of particulars. And

since particulars of the same genus or species have a similar soul, they tend to be connected to each other. Thus, if love derives from essential affinity, it continues, and if it derives from accidental affinity, it does not last long. When there is love between two persons not belonging to the same kind, or there is hatred between two persons belonging to the same kind, their love or hatred derives from accidental reasons. In most cases love based on accidental reason disappears, unless it has hidden reasons.<sup>105</sup> As a hidden reason al-Dabbâgh cites the Platonic myth<sup>106</sup> which states that souls were created like circles, each circle having been divided between two individuals, and each individual is now searching for the individual who will complete his circle. Al-Dabbâgh does not agree with the literal meaning (*ẓâhir al-lafẓ*) of the myth arguing that it is impossible for souls to be divided, for they are not material. Division is one of the material accidents. For him affinity means the identity of the souls' dispositions (*isti'dâd*). Furthermore, affinity is reached on account of an inborn character (*al-fiṭra al-ûlâ*) or after phases of practice. Anyhow, its real modality cannot be known but through mystical experience (*dhawq*).<sup>107</sup>

After discussing the three causes of love, benefaction, which derives from man's love for himself, beauty, and perfection, which exist in the beloved's essence, and affinity, al-Dabbâgh proves in a Ghazâlian<sup>108</sup> manner that God is most entitled to man's love. All the causes of love just mentioned are found in God in a true and perfect way, while in man they exist in a metaphorical way. As for benefaction, God is the true benefactor, and each act of benefaction in the world originates in Him. God gives man existence and the continuance thereof. Perfection means the joining of qualities which complete the essences, and these qualities originate in knowledge and power. God is Omniscient and Omnipotent, and He is the source of all beauty. Affinity between God and man takes the form



of man's imitation of God's qualities or inner affinity, meaning that God's spirit inheres in man. On this theme the differences between the two scholars are a. Al-Dabbâgh states that God radiates beauty to all existents, whereas in al-Ghazâlî beauty exists in things as a kind of disposition created by God, without being radiated to them; and b. Al-Ghazâlî devotes much space<sup>109</sup> to the notion that God is best entitled to man's love, while al-Dabbâgh's presentation seems to be a short summary of al-Ghazâlî's chapter.<sup>110</sup>

## 6. The classification of love

Al-Dabbâgh divides love into two parts: a. love according to its genus (*jins*); and b. love according to what takes place in the lover's essence (*bi-ḥasab mâ fî nafsihâ*). The first part is divided in turn into two parts: a. essential love (*maḥabba dhâtiyya*); and b. accidental love (*maḥabba 'araḍiyya*). When a man loves someone on account of the latter's essence (*li-dhâtihi*), his love is essential, and when he loves someone because of something other than the latter's essence, his love is accidental. Such is love for one who does good, whether to the lover or to others. The love for the benefactor derives from one's love for himself, which is an inborn disposition. An echo of al-Ghazâlî's notions is found in the following statement: 'There is no doubt that man's love for himself and for the perfection and continuance of his existence is a verified matter.'<sup>111</sup> All what helps man to preserve his health or his other conditions is beloved. He loves his children because they guarantee a kind of continuance of existence for him, because in the 'continuance of the existence of the species there is a kind of continuance of the individual (*idh fî baqâ' al-naw' ḍarb min baqâ' al-shakhṣ*).<sup>112</sup> Al-Dabbâgh uses almost the same wording as al-Ghazâlî (*fî baqâ' naslihi*

*naw' baqâ' lahu*).<sup>113</sup> This love is accidental, it decreases and increases according to the measure of the beloved's doing good to the lover. Moreover, it is metaphorically called love, for whoever loves a person because of a quality in the beloved which is directed toward him, actually loves himself. Noting that this kind of love is not his concern, al-Dabbâgh states that his aim is more nobler, by which he means the tackling of essential love.<sup>114</sup>

Essential love (*al-maḥabba al-dhâtiyya*) is divided into two parts: a. love whose reason can be understood (*mâ yu'qalu sababuhu*); and b. love whose reason cannot be understood. The first kind derives from the love of essential beauty and perfection existing in the beloved, and the second derives from hidden affinity, also called spiritual affinity, between the lover and the beloved. The love of perfection is part of the love of beauty because perfection shows beauty (*al-kamâl muḡhir li'l-jamâl*). Since our author states that he is dealing with love which is acquired through one's effort, the love which derives from affinity is outside the scope of his inquiry, because it is bestowed on the lover. However, he does make some general remarks concerning it. Anyhow, love deriving from affinity is the noblest of all kinds of love and the most enduring.<sup>115</sup>

As we have seen, al-Dabbâgh divides love into two parts: a. love according to its genus; and b. love according to what occurs in the lover's essence. Now, he turns to the second part which can be called the stages of love.<sup>116</sup> There are ten stations of love. But love is a general term which denotes two kinds of situations. In the first, the lover operates on love, meaning that he acquires, chooses, and affects it. Therefore he is called lover (*muḡibb*).<sup>117</sup> In the second kind, the opposite situation prevails; love operates on the individual, meaning that he neither chooses nor acquires it. He is dominated by love. This person is designated the passionate lover (*'âshiq*). Each kind has five stations



enumerated by the author.<sup>118</sup> Let us follow al-Dabbâgh's explanation of each state. *Ulfa* (lit. attachment, or friendship), the first station of the lovers, means to prefer the beloved above everything. The lover thinks only on the beloved's qualities and by them strengthens his adherence to the beloved, for example, by listening to songs about the beloved. In what follows al-Dabbâgh expresses an idea which is reminiscent of the Kabbala.<sup>119</sup> The basis of the eternal *ulfa* lies in the hidden world (*'âlam al-ghayb*). Every form in the sensual world (*'âlam al-shahâda*, lit. the world of testimony)<sup>120</sup> is a symbol of a spiritual essence existing in the hidden world. If a reality moves there, its symbol must move here, like a shadow which follows a man. *Ulfa* has both universal and particular meaning. Understood as an universal term, it denotes the connection of all existents to each other which derives from their participation in the reception of God's light of existence. The particular aspect of *ulfa* means the participation in the special quality of human beings, namely, knowledge expressed by belief. Therefore, the believers who are connected to each other by belief are like one body which suffers if any organ in it suffers.<sup>121</sup>

The meaning of *hawâ* (lit. passion, desire)<sup>122</sup> is 'absolute inclination of the heart toward the beloved and deviation from anything other than him.'<sup>123</sup> In this station love becomes strong, however, it is not a stable station, for love is renewed whenever the lover observes the beloved's beautiful forms and noble qualities. The difference between the first station and the second is not essential, rather it is a difference in intensity. In the second station, the lover is totally devoted to the beloved. 'To describe a lover by *hawâ* is not appropriate unless he relinquishes his desire (*hawâhu*) [for other things] and prefers to obey his beloved than to obey others. He hears only from his beloved and speaks only of him.'<sup>124</sup> Thus, if *hawâ* is directed toward God, it is positive, otherwise it is negative.<sup>125</sup> Al-Dabbâgh's

view is corroborated by a typical mystical interpretation of Qur'ân 45.23 which reads: 'Have you seen whoever has taken his desire to be his god? God has led him astray out of a knowledge, put a seal on his hearing and his heart and laid a veil on his eyes. Who shall guide him after God?'<sup>126</sup> Al-Dabbâgh interprets the first sentence to mean that such a person has no desire but to God. For the sake of the love for God he deviates from other ways, and this is done according to God's knowledge which guarantees his certainty. Putting a seal on his hearing and his heart means that he hears only his Beloved and finds only Him in his heart. The veil on his eyes denotes looking at God alone. And finally, if God does not guide him, who shall guide him?<sup>127</sup>

*Khulla* (lit. friendship), the third station, derives, according to al-Dabbâgh, from the verb *takhallala* which means 'it permeated.' *Khulla* thus means permeating the qualities of the beloved through the spirituality of the lover so that the latter's soul is shaped by them.<sup>128</sup> Consequently, the lover acts in accordance with the beloved's will. This station follows the purification of the lover's essence from material accidents so that the form of the absolute existence can be imprinted in it. In the background we undoubtedly detect the metaphor of the mirror.<sup>129</sup>

In the fourth place we find *shaghaf* (lit. deep love), eager desire for the beloved, a term which derives, in al-Dabbâgh's view, from the word *shaghâf*, the pericardium, the origin of the heart. However, says al-Dabbâgh, the heart here is not the material heart, but man's secret whose true origin is the world of the divine light which is the origin of love and knowledge. This station is achieved through God's providence.<sup>130</sup>

'As for the station of *wajd*<sup>131</sup> (the fifth station), it means the existence (*wujûd*) of the beloved's essence and all his true qualities imprinted in the lover's essence with a stable imprint which cannot be removed . . . If the lover reaches



such a degree, he loses his acquisition and choice.<sup>132</sup> At first sight it seems that there is no difference between this station and *khulla*, except for the stability of the former. But al-Dabbâgh imbues *wajd* with an added characteristic; the lover sees his beloved in all entities; he sees nothing except for God. Consequently he calls this station the station of singleness (*fardâniyya*). The author seems to understand by this term the identity of God with the world. However, that only God exists is a kind of observation revealed to the lover only when the annihilation of self takes place. It does not seem to me that al-Dabbâgh advocates pantheism. He is only saying that when love becomes strong, the lover sees God everywhere, but he does not hold the ontological identity of God and the world. *Wajd* is the last of the lovers' stations and the first of the passionate lovers' (*ushshâq*) stations.<sup>133</sup>

If the explanation of the lovers' stations is relatively short, al-Dabbâgh's presentation of the stations of the '*ushshâq*' is set forth without any elaboration. He justifies this treatment saying that the stations of passionate love are too sublime to be expressed in words or to be alluded to. Therefore one should refer to them generally, and only when the *sâlik*<sup>134</sup> reaches these stations, can his mystical experience tell him what words cannot.<sup>135</sup> These are the stations of the passionate lovers: a. *gharâm* (lit. infatuation) – which means to be intoxicated by the wine of love; b. *iftitân* (lit. seduction) – which means to throw off all restraint and to not pay attention to people; c. *walah* (lit. loss of discernment) – the state of perplexity; d. *dahash* – bewilderment; and e. *fanâ* '*an ru'yat al-nafs*' (lit. passing away from the contemplation of one's soul or self) – which means that the lover neither hears nor sees except through his beloved.<sup>136</sup> The common denominator of all these stations is the loss of self awareness which culminates in the last of them.

## 7. Kinds of lovers

On the basis of the ideas on love mentioned above, al-Dabbâgh divides the wayfarers following the stations of love (*al-sâlikîn li-maqâmât al-mahabbâ*) into three groups: a. those who attain love through both the senses and the imagination without exceeding both devices; b. those who attain love through both the senses and the intellect; and c. those who attain love through the intellect alone going beyond the first two states. Let us follow al-Dabbâgh's discussion of these three groups. The object of love of the first group is the material world and its beautiful and wonderful forms. The members of this group are fascinated by the marvelous creations, and the impressions they receive are only connected with the accidents of the body, such as presence and absence, meeting and leaving, and so on. Therefore, those people weep even for the ruins in which their beloved dwelt, and for every material particular which makes them remember their beloved.<sup>137</sup> In this process they are helped by their imagination which helps them think that there is nothing beyond the external beautiful form. The love for bodily beauty distracts man from obtaining the divine truth.<sup>138</sup>

The second kind of lovers, identified by al-Dabbâgh as most of the excellent wayfarers, are those who reach love through the senses and then through the intellect going beyond the world of imagination. At first their beloved is the beautiful form which is attached to a substrate, then, after reflection, they strip beauty from its substrate. The process by which the form is transmitted from the senses to the imagination was discussed above.<sup>139</sup> The reflection transmits the spiritual meaning of beauty to the soul which is delighted by it. Man's soul is not satisfied with the attaining of the spiritual form, and so searches for the perfection of the meaning which is attained from the beloved through the senses. This search does not stop until



the soul obtains unity with the form.<sup>140</sup> The love of those people is in an intermediate position; from one point of view it is noble, for its truth inheres in the soul and the soul takes pleasure in it, a pleasure which excels the bodily pleasure and, moreover, frequently this love causes man to experience the third kind of love. From another point of view, namely the connection of love to a specific individual thing on whose presence depends the lover's pleasure, it is imperfect.<sup>141</sup>

The second type of love is marked by signs and conditions one of which is the preference of the beloved above everything else. This enjoins the lover to empty his heart of everything other than the beloved, meaning to turn to his beloved wholeheartedly. Acts, such as preventing from giving and giving, which are regarded by other people as contraries, are regarded by the lover as good and similar, because they originate in one beloved.<sup>142</sup>

To ascend from this station to a higher one is possible only with God's help. God makes the lover know that the true form of his beloved exists now in his soul. This notion is reminiscent of the tradition which states that God created Adam in His form (image).<sup>143</sup> God's form constitutes the essence of man, and when it and man's soul are combined with a mixture of passionate love (*imtizâj 'ishqî*), the soul becomes delicate, receives the divine lights, and observes the spiritual forms existing in its essence. The process guarantees the ascent of the soul to the place it is destined to go.<sup>144</sup> There is no identification of the character of this divine form. We can only assume that by the true form al-Dabbâgh means the sacred divine beauty which occurs in the third kind of love. Another point to be emphasized is that this form causes the soul to observe other spiritual forms existing in it. One may conclude that the love which is caused by the presence of the divine beauty in man's soul makes man know. Thus not only knowledge brings about love, but love in turn causes man

to know higher spiritual forms. It is worth citing the poem which al-Dabbâgh brings at the end of this section and which illustrates the difference between profane and divine love.

In his love Majnûn al-'Âmirî<sup>145</sup> had/ but suffering of separation and remoteness (from his beloved Laylâ),

Contrary to him, my beloved/ lives in my heart and I have not ceased to come close to him,

My beloved is part of me, in me and with me/why thus should I ask what is the matter with me and what happens in me?<sup>146</sup>

The third group of lovers 'are those who observe the holy beauty which is revealed to their souls from the luminary world. Their souls receive the holy beauty because of the affinity between the souls and this beauty. The form of the holy beauty is impressed in the souls as the form of the sun is impressed in a luminary mirror (*mir'ât nûriyya*).<sup>147</sup> Then the soul (in a singular form) takes the form of this light (the light of beauty) and sees its luminary essence and the impressions of the luminary world in itself, and it loves its essence on account of the latter's being the holy light.' Thus man receives the form of beauty and his soul is united with this form with a kind of unity. This unity, in which the holy beauty becomes a part of the soul, is the meaning of love.<sup>148</sup>

This kind of love is the goal of lovers and the stages before it serve as a means to it. It is obtained through both practice of the heart (*riyâda qalbiyya*)<sup>149</sup> and divine help. The moment it occurs, one must not be afraid that it should disappear, because it lacks accidents, meaning it is not connected with what happens to the body, and it is an essential change in man's soul. God's help to man, His love for him, precedes man's love and serves as a condition for



it. Verse 54 in sûra 5, 'He loves them, and then they love Him,' attests to the priority in time of God's love.<sup>150</sup> Al-Dabbâgh's statement is reminiscent of the *agape* motif, however, there is no evidence of Christian influence on him.

Another difference between God's love for man and man's love for God is that man's love means the inclination (*mayl*) of his imperfect soul to perceive perfection whether absolute or partial in order to attain perfection which the soul lacks. Love for perfection is imprinted in the human soul. Here man's love for God is presented in terms of the *eros* motif. Contrary to the human love, God's love does not originate in the absence of perfection, for God is the source of all perfection and beauty. God does not need anything, for in existence there are only His essence and acts. Actually, He is all, and all things except Him are non-existent. Consequently, God's love for the world means His love for His essence, for all existents derive from Him. Here also the contents and the phraseology<sup>151</sup> are al-Ghazâlî's.<sup>152</sup>

As a result of the notion that God is all, al-Dabbâgh states that when a man passes away from his own essence, God is revealed to him in everything, not in the meaning of indwelling (*ḥulûl*),<sup>153</sup> for indwelling of a thing in another is characteristic of created beings. In this state of *fanâ'*, a man sees only his God, as if God has nothing with Him.<sup>154</sup> Al-Dabbâgh is careful not to be understood as believing in incarnation, therefore, *fanâ'*, in his view, is connected with a state of one's consciousness and not with ontology. However, he does not refer to the question which arises from the statement that 'God is all things.' If God is the only real existence, what is the relation between Him and all other things? I do not intend to enter into a discussion of the grave theological problems involved in the idea that true existence belongs to God alone. For example, how can we speak of one's practice when all things including one's

acts do not really exist. In other words, if all man's deeds are really God's meaning, *inter alia*, that God determines man's acts, there is no meaning to man's endeavors. Al-Dabbâgh would have answered that the problem should be dealt with according to two points of view, divine and human. From the divine point of view, all things are not truly existent, but from the human point of view, man feels that he can change his behavior and acts in order to achieve higher spiritual stages.

### 8. Stations and states of lovers

Al-Dabbâgh considers his summary of the three types of lovers as general, and hence continues to deal with the states and stations of the wayfarers in detail. At the beginning of his discussion he defines the two basic terms of the *Şûfîs*, *maqâm* and *ḥâl*. *Maqâm* (lit. station) means a stable disposition (*malaka thâbita*) of the wayfarer, while *ḥâl* (lit. state) conveys the transient influence of God's inspirations on the wayfarer's heart. Consequently, because of the transient character of the state, in wandering on the Path (*sulûk*), one should rely on stations and not on states. One of these stations is longing (*shawq*) which means 'the motion of the soul to complete its joy through imagining the presence of its beloved.'<sup>155</sup> This is one of the requisites of love, for the soul always longs for the object of its love. Again al-Dabbâgh repeats what al-Ghazâlî says about the explanation of the existence of *shawq*; both what is not perceived at all and what is totally perceived in all its respects are not longed for. One longs for what is perceived from one respect and not from another.<sup>156</sup> The pleasure the lover has motivates him to search for what he has not yet perceived. For example, whoever perceives a part of his beloved's qualities and knows certainly that the latter has other qualities more perfect than what he perceived and



that the pleasure of their perception is more perfect than the pleasure he had before, his *shawq* motivates him to search for what he missed. Like al-Ghazâlî, al-Dabbâgh states that this kind of *shawq* does not end even in the afterworld, for God's perfection is infinite, therefore the longing for it is infinite.<sup>157</sup> In like manner, imperfect perception also causes *shawq*, for the lover wants to make his perception perfect. For instance, whoever sees his beloved in light mist (in al-Ghazâlî it is darkness) and knows that the mist impedes perfect perception and that the mist will be dissolved, then he will long for a perfect vision when the obstacle finally disappears. The increase of *shawq* depends on the measure of expectation to the increase of clarity and disclosure in seeing.<sup>158</sup>

According to al-Dabbâgh, there are many veils which separate God from His lover. The idea of veils is well known in Islamic mystical literature and is corroborated by a tradition which states that seventy veils of light and darkness separate man from God.<sup>159</sup> So long as a man does not reach the station of unity, says al-Dabbâgh, the veils between him and his beloved (God) are not removed. Some veils are more subtle and luminary than the others. Whenever a veil is penetrated by the lover, he strives to penetrate another, until he attains the stage of unity. The author says nothing about the character of these veils except for indicating their being luminous and stating that the last veil is the lover's seeing his own essence when contemplating his beloved.<sup>160</sup> In other words, the lover's awareness of himself separates him from God. Passing away from seeing his essence and passing away from this passing away (*fanâ* 'an *al-fanâ*) will cause him to contemplate his beloved as he really is. *Fanâ* 'an *al-fanâ* means that the lover is so absorbed in his love that he is not aware of the process of passing away from his essence. If *fanâ* 'an *al-fanâ* does not take place, the lover will contemplate his beloved in the measure which fits his perception, meaning that he will not

see the latter's perfection. There is nothing more pleasant than the perfect contemplation of the beloved. In this world it is almost impossible to attain such a stage, but if it is attained, the longing which causes worry is calmed down and man's sorrow disappears. The lover reaches a station al-Dabbâgh calls *ishtiyaq*. Contrary to *shawq*, *ishtiyaq* brings about pure pleasure in which there is no sorrow, because the soul reaches the true contemplation of the beloved.<sup>161</sup> The view that *fanâ* 'an *al-fanâ* makes the lover 'contemplate his beloved as he really is' seems to contradict al-Dabbâgh's previously mentioned view that God's perfection is infinite and hence one can never know Him. (Al-Ghazâlî does not express the first view.) I assume that al-Dabbâgh makes a distinction between 'the contemplation of God as he really is' which applies to God as the only real entity and God's perfection which applies to His infinite attributes and acts. In *Mashâriq*, p. 68, l. 15, al-Dabbâgh points out that only God perceives His perfection.

Al-Dabbâgh follows al-Ghazâlî in defining the state (in al-Ghazâlî it is a station) of *uns* as the joy of the heart when seeing the beauty of the beloved (*surûr al-qalb bi-shuhûd jamâl al-ḥabîb*).<sup>162</sup> In this state the lover imagines that all beings share his feeling with him. If *uns* overcomes a man, he will exaggerate in *idlâl*<sup>163</sup> so that he might utter sayings and experience states which ignorant people would regard as unbelief and deviation.<sup>164</sup> By 'sayings' al-Dabbâgh means the ecstatic utterances called *shataḥât* expressed, for example, by al-Ḥallâj, who said 'I am the Truth' (= God *anâ al-ḥaqq*),<sup>165</sup> or by Abû Yazîd al-Bisṭâmî who said 'Praise be to Me, how great is My Majesty' (*subḥânî mâ ajallanî*).<sup>166</sup>

*Riḍâ*, one of the highest stations of the wayfarer, means the absence of feeling of suffering. It differs from *ṣabr* in which the wayfarer bears difficulty and feels suffering. In al-Ghazâlî this definition of *ṣabr* is the second aspect of



*riḍā*.<sup>167</sup> However, both stations prevent the *sālik* from attaining true love, for true love is expressed through the lover's joy in all that derives from his beloved even if it is separation. The author exemplifies this station by adducing some stories on mystics of which I would like to cite one: 'Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith (al-Muḥāsibī) said: I saw a person in Baghdād who was beaten a thousand times with the lash and did not utter a word. When he was brought to the prison, I followed him and asked him about his silence. He said: My beloved, because of whom I was beaten, stood in front of me looking at me. I said to him: Suppose you were looking at the greatest beloved (God). He cried once and fell dead.'<sup>168</sup>

Al-Dabbāgh sums up his examples saying that whoever does not find his beloved's torment pleasant is remote from true love. He rejects the view, ascribed by him to the ignorant, that it is impossible that *riḍā* should exist and that only *ṣabr* exists. Not only *riḍā* exists but it is a stable station whose power increases or decreases according to the nature of the lover.<sup>169</sup>

Contrary to al-Ghazālī, al-Dabbāgh includes *khawf* and *rajā* in the list of the lovers' stations.<sup>170</sup> However, these are the stations of the common lovers (*'awwām al-muḥibbīn*). *Khawf* (lit. fear) means the feeling of missing the beloved or of the attack of a detestable thing. This definition lacks the notion of 'future'. Such a definition is found in the *Iḥyā'*: *khawf* means the suffering of the heart because of the expectation of the occurrence of a future detestable thing.<sup>171</sup> *Rajā'* (lit. hope) is defined as the desire of the soul to attain its wish from its beloved. Also here al-Dabbāgh omits the attribute of future, whereas in al-Ghazālī *rajā'* means 'the joy of the heart in expectation of what is beloved.'<sup>172</sup> The two stations just mentioned befall the wayfarer at the beginning of his way, for whoever loves a thing wishes that it continues to exist and fears its disappearance. However, says al-Dabbāgh, if the power of

one of these two stations increases at the expense of the other to the extent that the lover is qualified by the weak station, this constitutes imperfection on the part of the lover. That is because fear alone enjoins alienation from the beloved, and hope alone causes the lover to be complacent. Consequently, the two stations must be balanced in the course of the wayfarer's wandering.<sup>173</sup>

*Al-qabḍ wa'l-baṣṭ* are two states which correspond to the stations of fear and hope, respectively. *Baṣṭ* literally means extension or enlargement, and in the Ṣūfī literature it means the extension of the enthusiastic feeling associated with perfect joy and ease. Its opposite is *qabḍ* (lit. reduction or contraction), a state in which the mystic's soul is contracted, sometimes to such an extent that the mystic loses his self.<sup>174</sup>

A station which, in al-Dabbāgh's view, is higher in rank than fear is *murâqaba* (lit. attentive regard). *Murâqaba*, which pertains to the stations of the true lovers of God, denotes man's knowledge that God, his beloved, always watches him. As a result, he always thinks about his beloved and refrains from thinking about other things.<sup>175</sup> Whoever possesses this station cannot turn to people and listen to their talk. If he looks at them it is a look to their Producer, not to their essences. Consequently, he is with the Producer not with the production. One may see such a person present with others, but he is absent because of his secret.<sup>176</sup> The explanation for this phenomenon is the mystic's awareness of God's presence in his heart and his ability to see God in each thing. In other words, whoever maintains such contact with God cannot pay attention to His creatures.<sup>177</sup>

In like manner, also *hayba* (reverence), an essential station of the lover which means the lover's exaltation of the beloved, prevents the lover from looking at other things. Whenever qualities of God's majesty (*jalâl*) are revealed to the lover, this station increases. Just as fear



disappears whenever hope comes, so reverence stops whenever man's contemplation of God stops.<sup>178</sup>

One of the requisites of love is jealousy which applies to both the lover and the beloved. Each of them is jealous of his soul and his beloved. The lover's jealousy of his soul is expressed through his wish that no other entity, even if it is subtle, except (*ghayr*) his beloved, exists in his soul. He considers his soul suitable to love his beloved so that it loves the beloved not by means of something else (*ghayruhu*)<sup>179</sup> but by means of the soul itself. As a result, the lover passes away from his soul (*yafnâ 'an nafsihi*) when he contemplates God. As for man's jealousy of his beloved, it expresses the wish that no pretender of God's love and no people who use tricks will be qualified as a lover of God. The beloved's jealousy of his soul originates in his knowledge of his perfect essence and attributes of beauty and majesty by which he is specified without having need of others (*ghayrihi*). This state fits only God. Concerning the jealousy of the beloved for his lover, the beloved wishes that the lover will turn only to him, not to others. Therefore he particularizes the lover through revealing his secrets only to him. The beloved does not permit to anyone to look at him except for the lover.<sup>180</sup>

The last station brought forward by al-Dabbâgh is *dhikr* (recollection or remembrance of God), which is one of the lover's signs. Whoever loves something mentions it often. Following the traditional tripartite division of *dhikr*, our author states that the first kind of *dhikr* is expressed with the tongue but it originates in the heart.<sup>181</sup> The lover repeats this kind of *dhikr* frequently and finds it pleasant. The second *dhikr*, the *dhikr* of the élite (*al-khawâṣṣ*), is of the heart; the lover imagines the reality of the beloved in his heart. Al-Dabbâgh calls this *dhikr* the conversation of the spirit (*munajât al-rûḥ*).<sup>182</sup> One should not move his tongue when mentioning God in the heart, for the tongue, even if it expresses inner meaning, enjoins separation. He seems to

mean by 'separation' the state in which two separate devices utter God's name. The most exalted *dhikr*, which pertains to the élite of the élite (*khâṣṣat al-khâṣṣa*), denotes the absence of the rememberer (*dhâkir*) in the remembered (*madhkûr*) to such an extent that full identification of the two exists. Actually, al-Dabbâgh speaks of a station in which the mystic loses his self-awareness and becomes united with the object of his love.<sup>183</sup>

### 9. The relations between the states

We have seen that al-Dabbâgh introduces several stations and states which are involved in love (*qabḍ wa-baṣṭ*, *murâqaba*, *hayba*, *ghayra*, and *dhikr*) and which are not mentioned by al-Ghazâlî. The relations between these stations themselves and between the stations and the lover's ultimate goal are the theme of the next discussion.

The first point emphasized by al-Dabbâgh is the dynamic process of wandering on the Path. The wayfarer must not stop in his ascent toward his beloved. Whenever he sees a quality of his beloved and adheres to it without trying to attain other qualities, this interruption prevents him from attaining a higher position. Each exalted state obtained by the lover paves the way to attaining another, more perfect state. The lover does not cease his wandering until he reaches the station of bewilderment (*dahash*).<sup>184</sup> This is a station in which the lover's soul separates from the material world and becomes divine. The soul now only aspires to ascend in the ranks of love and to reject all things except the beloved. Al-Dabbâgh also calls this station the station of freedom (*ḥurriyya*). Following the traditional Ṣûfî interpretation of freedom,<sup>185</sup> he states that a free person is whoever is not enslaved by material beings and their accidents, but only by God, his beloved. Like al-Ghazâlî



who deals with many issues in relative terms,<sup>186</sup> so al-Dabbâgh says that the lover is free in relation to the beings in the world, but he is a slave in relation to the beloved, that is, because the lover who is a slave absolutely needs others (*al-faqîr muṭlaqan*), whereas the beloved absolutely does not need anything (*al-ghaniyy muṭlaqan*).<sup>187</sup>

When the lover attains contemplation of his beloved or perfect union (*'ayn al-jam'*),<sup>188</sup> most of the states and stations disappear because for example, *shawq*, 'the movement of the heart to attain its object of desire,' is needed no more when the beloved is present before the lover. Hence, if such a station still exists, when the goal has already been attained, it becomes a veil.<sup>189</sup>

When the lover is free from material accidents, a position al-Dabbâgh calls *tajrîd* (lit. removal) or in a passive sense *tajarrud*, the form of love overcomes him and purify him of accidental stains (*shawâ'ib 'araḍiyya*). Al-Dabbâgh regards purification of the soul as a process which contains several stages whose peak is perfect purification in which the lover's essence becomes a luminous mirror ready to receive beautiful forms from its beloved. The lover takes pleasure in looking at all the beautiful forms, for he regards them as one owing to their single origin, even if they are many in their external appearance. Actually, as the mystical poet of love, a contemporary of al-Dabbâgh, Jalâl al-Dîn al-Rûmî (d. 672/1273) says: 'I have become a mirror for Thy Image alone,'<sup>190</sup> there exists a kind of union between the lover and the beloved, which is understood as a rational union not as an ontological one (*al-ittihâd amr 'aqlî fi'l-dhihn lâ fi'l-khârij*).<sup>191</sup> In other words, the lover thinks that his essence is identical to his beloved's essence.<sup>192</sup> Al-Dabbâgh makes a distinction between the state of union (*ḥâlat al-jam'*) in which the mystic passes away from his soul, hence, from the whole world, because his soul is the nearest thing to him, and the state of separation (*ḥâlat al-tafriqa*) in which the mystic looks at his soul, meaning

that the soul is separated from its beloved. Whoever attains the first station sees his beloved in everything and hears his speaking from everything. Again, characterizing this station as rational, our author states that 'the lover thinks that he sees his beloved in each tiny particle whether manifest or hidden.'<sup>193</sup> To illustrate the lover who is in a state of unawareness of himself in the presence of his beloved, al-Dabbâgh brings an example taken from profane love. A person passionately loved his slave girl. When she was ill, he prepared a pot of soup for her. Stirring the soup with a spoon, he heard her crying which caused him to be puzzled and unaware of himself. As a result, the spoon fell from his hand and he continued to stir the hot soup with his hand till his fingers were cut off. Another example is taken from Qur'ân 12.31 which tells us that Egyptian women cut their hands when they saw the beauty of Joseph.<sup>194</sup>

It is worth noting that those who are firmly rooted in their states (*ahl al-tamkîn fi'l-aḥwâl*)<sup>195</sup> are not influenced by such sudden circumstances which have an effect only on those who are not accustomed to the presence of their beloved. The gnostics (*al-'ârifûn*) contemplate their beloved continuously in all essences and in all existents. Actually, they see only God.<sup>196</sup> Concerning nearness to God, the prophets are placed on the highest rank. They are the people of continuing presence (*ahl al-ḥuḍûr 'alâ al-dawâm*) which means that God is always present in them. Below them stand the saints (*awliyâ'*) who rarely attain the state of God's presence. They can reach the continuing contemplation of God only after separation from their bodies, either through death, or, when alive, through absolutely freeing themselves from material bondage, a state which scarcely takes place. The lowest rank is the common wayfarers who find in seeing external beautiful things that which makes them remember their beloved and long for the beauty existing in the beautiful



essences, these being the expression of the universal beauty. Such lovers need the external world in order to perceive their beloved.<sup>197</sup> However, seeing external things of the beloved or in the beloved, in case of divine love, is only a condition to attaining the state of affinity between the lover and the beloved. Contrary to the state of the third group (the commoners), true love consists in 'looking with the eye of love which sees only perfection.' Modern scholars would call this kind of perception 'idealization.'<sup>198</sup> When a man loves a woman, or vice versa, the lover may ascribe to the beloved beauty which another person does not see, or may ignore ugliness which another person does see. Al-Dabbâgh tells us about a man who passionately loved a slave girl and did not heed that she lost one of her eyes. When, after a long time, he took notice of this, she told him that his love disappeared and therefore he now saw her defect.<sup>199</sup> The process of love begins with perceiving external signs, but reaches its highest point when the lover passes away from seeing external signs which turn out to be a veil obscuring the perception of the inner beauty. However, as we have seen, al-Dabbâgh notes that God is revealed to some gnostics in everything, so that for them external things do not constitute a veil.<sup>200</sup>

The effect of the lights of revelation are so strong, in al-Dabbâgh's view, that they can erase the impressions of essences or the essences themselves. As spirituality becomes stronger because of these lights, the body becomes weaker and life is shortened under their influence. For this reason, God brought the Prophet back from being overcome by revelation to the lowest world for the purpose of benefiting his community, for calling people to the truth enjoins sociability which cannot be carried out when the Prophet is diverted from material essences. God gives Prophets and distinguished scholars the capability of governing their states (*al-tamkîn fi'l-aḥwâl*) and stations, so that they can ascend to the highest rank and from the heights

immediately descend to the lowest rank, or vice versa. This enables them to contact people whenever they wish to.<sup>201</sup>

### 10. Summary

On the one hand al-Dabbâgh's theory of divine love is clearly marked by Ghazâlîan influence, while on the other it has some features which differ significantly from al-Ghazâlî's theory. Generally, al-Dabbâgh's theory is more elaborate, albeit sometimes repetitious and not always focused; but al-Dabbâgh does provide us with detailed explanations concerning some issues – such as the connection between attraction to beauty and love, the classification of love and lovers, and the categories of human souls – which are lacking in al-Ghazâlî. He deviates from al-Ghazâlî on some crucial points. Though agreeing with al-Ghazâlî that knowledge brings about love, he adds that love also brings about knowledge. Moreover, just as the removal of the attraction to bodily matters causes a man to love, love itself removes the thinking of the soul on material things. Whereas al-Ghazâlî adopts the extrovertive approach to mysticism, by which man's awareness of the unity of existence derives from observation of the external phenomena of the world, al-Dabbâgh advocates both the extrovertive and the introvertive approaches, stating that the latter teaches man to know this unity through inquiry into his soul. Neoplatonic emanationism plays a great role in al-Dabbâgh and enables him to show that love is a mutual outcome of both the structure of man's soul and the light of the universal beauty which derives from God. Love appears in al-Dabbâgh as a unity of man's soul with the divine beauty; the divine beauty becomes a part of the human soul. Thus, attraction to beauty in al-Dabbâgh is caused not only by the pleasure a man feels



when looking at beautiful things, but also due to a divine element which exists in his soul. Whereas al-Ghazâlî emphasizes man's endeavors, even in the world to come, to attain knowledge and hence love, al-Dabbâgh emphasizes the influence of the divine world on the creation of love for God in man. He states that the highest degree of love for God is obtained only by God's help. However, both writers agree on several points: 1. Material things prevent the human being from true perception and hence from pleasure, love, and happiness; 2. Knowledge in this world and knowledge in the afterworld are connected; 3. True beauty applies to God alone, hence He is the loftiest object of love; 4. Attaining happiness means the love for God; 5. Union with God, which equals love for Him, is neither sensual nor emotional but rational, hence, union is not to be understood in ontological terms; 6. The love for God is an endless process; 7. An ambivalent relation toward the world – both despise materiality, but the phenomena of the world serve al-Ghazâlî as proof of God's greatness and other attributes, which cause man to love God, while al-Dabbâgh regards the beautiful things of the world as a basis for attaining the idea of beauty and hence love; and finally 8. Both theories are religiously Islamic, although they contain Platonic and Neoplatonic elements (in al-Dabbâgh the Neoplatonic influence is more salient), because the latter are interwoven into the framework of Muslim beliefs and dogmas.

## NOTES

## PREFACE

- 1 *Kitâb 'atf al-alif al-ma'lûf 'alâ al-lâm al-ma'tûf*, ed. J. C. Vadet, Cairo 1962, p. 2. (The date of al-Daylamî's death is unknown. He was a disciple of the famous author on mysticism, Abû 'Abdallâh Muḥammad ibn Khafîf (d. 371/981). R. Walzer, 'Aristotle, Galen, and Palladius on Love,' in his *Greek into Arabic – Essays on Islamic Philosophy*, Oxford 1963, p. 48.) Vadet translates the title as follows: 'Livre de l'inclinaison de l'alif uni sur le lâm incliné.' It seems to me that by this title al-Daylamî makes an allusion to the metaphor of love which is light. The conjunction of *alif* to *lâm* creates when it is doubled the verb *la'la'a* meaning to shine. This verb occurs before a formula similar to our title *wa'l-lâm bi'l-alif al-ma'tûf mu'talif* ('The *lâm* is connected to the inclined *alif*.' The *alif* is inclined [N] when it is connected to *lâm*) in a poem (*Kitâb 'atf*, p. 44, para. 164) written by al-Ḥallâj. In Shaydhala<sup>1</sup>, fol. 35a, this poem appears anonymously with some differences.
- 2 Cf. *The Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics*, ed. J. Hastings, London 1915, vol. VIII, p. 154.
- 3 Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 146f.

## I INTRODUCTION

- 1 Singer, *The Nature of love*, p. 47f.
- 2 *Symposium*, 189–192. Singer, *ibid.*, pp. 50–52.
- 3 *Symposium*, 192. Trans. Jowett, vol. I, p. 562.
- 4 *Symposium*, 200–201.
- 5 *Symposium*, 205f. This is the statement of Diotima, the prophetess of Mantinea, Socrates' interlocutor. Singer, *ibid.*, p. 52f.



- 6 *Symposium*, 210f. Singer, *ibid.*, pp. 55–57.
- 7 In his translation of Plato's dialogues (vol. I, p. 533), Jowett says that the theme of the *Symposium* is the 'passion of the reason,' and that 'in the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* love and philosophy join hands, and one is an aspect of the other.' *Ibid.*, p. 393.
- 8 Singer, *ibid.*, p. 73. Thus in Platonism true love is equivalent to true rationalism, for both have common basis, that is knowledge. If love of any kind means longing for the Good, and only the philosopher knows the nature of the Good, only the philosopher can truly love. It is not our aim here to tackle the question posed by Singer: Can only the philosopher truly desire the Good and truly attain it? See *ibid.*, pp. 82–87. This question will be asked again in the context of al-Ghazâlî's theory of divine love. See below p. 78.
- 9 Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, p. 167.
- 10 The way and stages of the soul's ascent is described in the *Symposium* (211).
- 11 Nygren, *ibid.*, pp. 169–181. According to a myth mentioned in *Phaedrus* (248), 'the soul which has seen most of the truth (in the upper world), shall come to the birth as a philosopher.' Jowett's trans. vol. I, p. 454. Hence, a man is predestined to long for wisdom, a conclusion which seems to contradict the spirit of free choice in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*.
- 12 *Nicomachen Ethics*, VIII, 1156. Singer, *The Nature of Love*, p. 88f.
- 13 Singer, *ibid.*, pp. 93–95.
- 14 *Physics*, I, 192a. Averroes, *Tahâfut*, vol. II, p. 20 (note 4 to vol. I, p. 22). This notion goes back to Plato. *Symposium*, 186–189.
- 15 *Metaphysics*, 1072b. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, pp. 183–86.
- 16 Averroes, *Tahâfut*, vol. II, p. 91, note 6 to vol. I, p. 138.
- 17 For a discussion of Plotinus' theory of divine love see R. Arnou, *Le désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin*, Rome 1967.
- 18 Plotinus, *Enneads*, I, 6, 5f. IV, V, 1, 1ff.
- 19 *Ibid.*, V, 8.9.
- 20 *Ibid.*, III, 5.
- 21 *Ibid.*, VI, 9, 9. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, pp. 186–193.
- 22 Singer, *The Nature of Love*, p. 159.

- 23 Vajda, *L'Amour de Dieu*, p. 66.
- 24 We are referring to the Bible, the Talmud, the Midrash, the Apocrypha, and the liturgy.
- 25 *Deuteronomy* 10.12: 'And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him . . .' The translation of Biblical verses is based on *The Holy Scriptures*, revised and edited by Harold Fisch, Koren Publishers, Jerusalem 1998.
- 26 *Deuteronomy*, 19.9: 'If you shall keep all these commandments to do them, which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and walk ever in his ways.' *Ibid.*, 30.15–16: 'See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command you this day to love the Lord your God . . .' Cf. *Pslams*, 31.24.
- 27 *Joshua* 22.5: 'But take great care to do the commandment and the Tora . . . to love the Lord your God.' Daniel 9.5: ' . . . O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping covenant and troth to those who love Him, and to those who keep His commandments.' Cf. *Nehemiah* 1.5. *Apocrypha*, *Sirach* 2.15: 'His lovers keep His ways.' The Rabbis interpret *Deuteronomy* 5.10 'those who love Me and keeps My commandments' to mean the identification of love with carrying out the commandments. Vajda, *L'Amour de Dieu*, p. 35f.
- 28 *Isaiah*, 41.8.
- 29 Vajda, *L'Amour de Dieu*, pp. 22, 41f. *Jubilees*, 17.17. As a rule, the Rabbis prefer whoever acts on account of love for God to whoever acts on account of fear of God. Vajda, *ibid.*, pp. 36, 48f. Büchler, *Studies in Sin and Atonement*, pp. 160, 164. To act out of love means to obey God's will without paying attention to reward or affliction, whereas if one obeys God because omission of obedience brings about God's affliction, he acts out of fear. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
- 30 Vajda, *ibid.*, p. 38.
- 31 Vajda, *ibid.*, p. 42. Büchler, *Studies in Sin and Atonement*, p. 149, p. 173, n. 3. Singer, *The Nature of Love*, p. 255.
- 32 *Pslams*, 119.31: 'I have held fast (*dabaq*) to your testimonies' meaning the Tora. The verb *dabaq* is equivalent to *ahab* (he loved).
- 33 *Deuteronomy*, 11.22. Vajda, *L'Amour de Dieu*, p. 40.
- 34 Vajda, *ibid.*, p. 51f.



- 35 *Deuteronomy*, 10.21–22. Here the Scripture uses the verb *dabaq*. See note 32 above. Vajda, *ibid.*, p. 45f.
- 36 *The Complete Artscroll Siddur*, trans. Rabbi Nosson Scherman, New York 1997, p. 91. This sentence belongs to an ancient prayer, which is called 'love' (*ahaba*) already mentioned by the *Mishna*. Vajda, *L'Amour de Dieu*, p. 30.
- 37 *The Complete Artscroll Siddur*, p. 157.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 647.
- 39 This name refers to the 'Ethics of the Fathers.'
- 40 *Avot*, ch. 1.3.
- 41 Vajda, *L'Amour de Dieu*, p. 48.
- 42 A sacrifice which is totally burnt on the altar and leaves no portion, neither for a priest nor an ordinary person.
- 43 Vajda, *ibid.*, p. 63f.
- 44 Vajda, *ibid.*, p. 28 which relates to the Apocrypha. The same notion also appears in the paragraph called *ahaba* in the weekday morning service. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- 45 The verb used is *hashaq* which is equivalent to *ahab* (he loved).
- 46 Vajda (*ibid.*, p. 23) is mistaken when saying that the love for God is absent from *Proverbs*.
- 47 *Tobie*, 13.13. *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Testament of Joseph*, 9.2.
- 48 *Mishna, Avot*, 6.1.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 3.18. Vajda, *L'Amour de Dieu*, p. 56. For God's love for Israel see also *Bereshit Rabba*, 80.8.
- 50 *The Complete Artscroll Siddur*, p. 91.
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 663.
- 52 The verb here used is *razah*.
- 53 Büchler, *Studies in Sin and Atonement*, pp. 170–5. Vajda, *L'Amour de Dieu*, pp. 59–61. *Babylonian Talmud*, *Berakhot*, 5a, b.
- 54 Cf. *Pslams* 63.2: 'O God, You are my God; earnestly I seek you: my soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for you ...'
- 55 Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, the translator's [P. S. Watson] preface, pp. IX–XIII. Singer, *The Nature of Love*, pp. 269–271.
- 56 The translation of the *New Testament* verses is according to *The New English Bible, The New Testament* (second edition), Oxford and Cambridge 1970.
- 57 Nygren, *ibid.*, pp. 75–81. Singer, *ibid.*, pp. 275–279.

- 58 Nygren, *ibid.*, pp. 86–90.
- 59 *Ibid.*, pp. 91–104.
- 60 *Ibid.*, pp. 105–123.
- 61 Cf. *Babylonian Talmud*, *Shabbat*, fol. 31a.
- 62 Nygren, *ibid.*, p. 152.
- 63 *Ibid.*, pp. 146–158.
- 64 *Ibid.*, p. 210.
- 65 Singer, *The Nature of Love*, p. 315f.
- 66 The translation is according to A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, Oxford 1983. 'Follow me' means obey God's precepts which Muḥammad showed you in the Qur'ân. This verse is called 'the love verse' (*âyat al-maḥabba*). Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Madârij*, vol. III, p. 16.
- 67 Al-Râzî, *Mafâtîḥ al-ghayb*, part 31, p. 122. *Idem*, *Lawâmi' al-bayyinât*, p. 287.
- 68 It is worth noting that some scholars interpreted verbs such as 'they sought (*ibtagḥâ* – Qur'ân 17.57) to come to God' to mean 'they sought nearness to God' and hence to love Him. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Madârij*, vol. III, p. 17.
- 69 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 294, ll. 24–26.
- 70 *Ibid.*, p. 295, ll. 2–3.
- 71 *Ibid.*, ll. 4–7.
- 72 The verb used is *razaqa* (*urzuqnî ḥubbaka*). Probably, the Prophet wants to say that just as You grant sustenance to people (*razaqa*), so grant me your love.
- 73 *Iḥyâ'*, *ibid.*, ll. 11–12.
- 74 Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 60. Cf. I. Goldziher, 'Die Gottesliebe in der islamischen Theologie,' *Der Islam* 9 (1919), pp. 144–158.
- 75 Cf. Schimmel, *Studien*, p. 36.
- 76 *Kitâb al-arba'in*, p. 226.
- 77 Al-Bâqillânî, *Kitâb al-tamhîd*, ed. R. J. McCarthy, Beirut 1957, para. 50, pp. 27f.
- 78 Al-Juwaynî, *Kitâb al-irshâd ilâ qawâti' al-adilla fî uṣûl al-itiqâd*, ed. As'ad Tamîm, Beirut 1985, p. 211f. Cf. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Madârij*, vol. III, p. 14.
- 79 Abdel-Kader, *Al-Junayd*, p. 38.
- 80 This is an allusion to the *bi-lâ kayfa* doctrine. See my 'The *Bi-lâ Kayfa* Doctrine and its Foundations in Islamic Theology,' *Arabica* 42, 3 (1995), pp. 365–379.
- 81 Ibn Taymiyya makes a distinction between God's creative will (*irâda khalqiyya kawniyya*) which applies to all that occurs, and His religious prescriptive will (*irâda dîniyya*



- shar'iyya*) which means love for the thing willed and for those who may cause it to happen. This will does not necessitate the existence of the thing willed. Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 66. Since God loves Himself, He loves His creatures whose source is He Himself. *Ibid.*, pp. 71–73. The idea of God's self-love goes back to Plotinus. *Ibid.*, p. 235f, n. 59.
- 82 The 'wise purpose' stated by Ibn Taymiyya is not to be identified with the Mu'tazilite view of *ḥikma*. The Mu'tazilites teach that God does not carry out purposeless or useless acts, but all His acts are done wisely, that is, purposely. Cf. B. Abrahamov, *AL-Qâsim ibn Ibrâhîm on the Proof of God's Existence – Kitâb al-Dalîl al-Kabîr*, Leiden 1990, p. 187, n. 47. The Ash'arites oppose the notion of *ḥikma* as applied to God, whereas Ibn Taymiyya regards it as the expression of the laws of logic. Bell, *ibid.*, pp. 66–71.
- 83 *Rasâ'il ikhwân al-ṣafâ'*, Beirut 1957 (rep. of Khayr al-Dîn al-Ziriklî's edition, Cairo 1928), vol. III, pp. 269–286. I would like to thank Prof. Carmela Baffioni who turned my attention to a Spanish translation of this epistle. Ricardo-Felipe A. Reyan, 'La "Risâla fî mâhiyyat al-isq" de las *Rasâ'il Ijwân al-Ṣafâ'*, *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 6 (1995), pp. 185–207. The non-Qur'ânic term '*ishq*', which literally means passionate love (Cf. L. A. Giffen, *Theory of Profane Love among the Arabs: The Development of the Genre*, New York 1971, p. 86), is sometimes equivalent to *maḥabba*. Already the theologian 'Abd al-Wâḥid ibn Zayd (d. 177/793–94) applied this term to denote sacred love relying on a *ḥadîth qudsî* in which God says: 'He loved Me ('*ashiqanî*') and I loved him (*wa-'ashiqtuḥu*). Al-Daylamî (*Kitâb al-'atf*, p. 5) refers to a controversy among the mystics concerning the application of '*ishq*' to God stressing the fact that his master, the famous mystic Abû 'Abdallâh ibn Khafîf (d. 371/981), first opposed this use, then, after realizing that al-Junayd spoke of this term, also allowed the use of it. M. Arkoun, 'Ishq', *EI2*, vol. IV, p. 118f. Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 165f. Ernst, 'Rûzbihân Baqlî', pp. 186–189.
- 84 Edited by M. A. F. Mehren in his *Traité Mystiques d'Aboû Alî al-Ḥosain b. Abdallâh b. Sînâ ou d'Avicenne*, Leiden 1899, part III, pp. 1–27.
- 85 *Kitâb risâla fî khabar ijtimâ' al-falâsifa 'alâ rumûz al-'ishqiyya* (Information about the Agreement of the

- Philosophers Regarding the Signs of Passionate Love*). See B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadîm*, New York and London 1970, vol. II, p. 622.
- 86 Cf. F. W. Zimmermann, 'The Origins of *The Theology of Aristotle*,' in *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: The Theology and Other Tests*, ed. J. Kraye, W. F. Ryan, and C. B. Schmitt, London 1986, pp. 110–240. P. B. Fenton, 'The Arabic and Hebrew Versions of *The Theology of Aristotle*,' *ibid.*, pp. 241–264. I thank Prof. Y. T. Langemann for calling my attention to these two important articles.
- 87 E. L. Fackenheim, 'A Treatise on Love by Ibn Sînâ,' *Mediaeval Studies* 7 (1945), p. 208f.
- 88 *Ibid.*, p. 209f.
- 89 *Rasâ'il*, vol. III, p. 271. In this brief survey, I only introduce the basic tenets of the Brethren's theory.
- 90 In material things, state the Brethren, there is only the possibility of proximity, mixture and touch, but not union. *Rasâ'il*, vol. III, p. 273.
- 91 *Ibid.*, pp. 272–275. The Brethren of Purity were influenced in this matter by Hermetism. Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists*, p. 50f.
- 92 *Ibid.*, p. 276f. In some places in ancient Greece, such as Thebes and Lacedemon, an elder friend was attached to a beloved youth, and this was often considered a part of the latter's education. Jowett's trans., vol. I, p. 537.
- 93 It is very interesting that the love of men toward women is not mentioned. Did the Brethren think that such love is not an inborn disposition?
- 94 *Rasâ'il*, vol. III, pp. 276–278.
- 95 *Ibid.*, pp. 278–281. See below pp. 75–78.
- 96 *Ibid.*, p. 281f.
- 97 'God is the Light of the heavens and the earth; the likeness of His Light is as a niche wherein is a lamp (the lamp in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star) kindled from a Blessed Tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West whose oil well-nigh would shine, even if no fire touched it; Light upon Light; (God guides to His Light whom He will.) (And God strikes similitudes for men, and God has knowledge of everything.)
- 98 Following the Neoplatonists the Brethren held an emanationist hierarchy in which the first three members correspond to the Plotinian triad: 1. the Creator (*al-bârî*);



2. the Universal Active Intellect (*al-'aql al-kullî al-fa'âl*); 3. the Universal Soul (*al-nafs al-kulliyya*); 4. the Prime Matter (*al-hayûlâ al-ûlâ*); 5. Nature (*al-ṭabî'a*); 6. the Absolute Body (*al-jism al-muṭlaq*); 7. the Sphere (*al-falak*); 8. the Four Elements (*al-arkân*); and 9. the worldly beings (*al-muwalladât*). I. R. Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists – An Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwân al-Ṣafâ)*, London 1980, p. 34f. S. H. Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines – Conceptions of Nature and Methods Used for its Study by the Ikhwân al-Ṣafâ, al-Bîrûnî, and Ibn Sînâ*, revised ed., London 1978, p. 51f.
- 99 *Rasâ'il*, vol. III, p. 282f.
- 100 *Ibid.*, pp. 284–286. See above p. 4f.
- 101 For the sources of this epistle see Fackenheim's footnotes in his translation of Ibn Sînâ's epistle. Cf. F. Rundgren, 'Avicenna on Love – Studies in the *Risâla fî mâhiyyat al-'ishq* I,' *Orientalia Suecana* XXVII–XXVIII (1978–1979), p. 51f. Rundgren translates chapter 1 into English and discusses the sources of several fundamental terms and issues occurring there. *Ibid.*, pp. 52–62.
- 102 Rundgren, *ibid.*, p. 62. The term '*ishq*' is translated according to Ibn Sînâ's use. We shall see that, for example, in al-Ghazâlî it denotes 'passionate love.'
- 103 Ibn Sînâ, *Risâla*, p. 4f. Fackenheim, *A Treatise*, p. 213f.
- 104 Ibn Sînâ, *Ibid.*, pp. 5–7. Fackenheim, *Ibid.*, p. 214f.
- 105 Ibn Sînâ, *ibid.*, p. 7f. Fackenheim, *ibid.*, p. 215f.
- 106 Ibn Sînâ, *ibid.*, p. 8. Fackenheim, *ibid.*, p. 216f.
- 107 Ibn Sînâ, *ibid.*, p. 14. Trans. Fackenheim, *ibid.*, p. 220.
- 108 Ibn Sînâ, *ibid.*, p. 15f. Fackenheim, *ibid.*, p. 221.
- 109 See above p. 2.
- 110 In al-Ghazâlî this notion is expressed by the term *baqâ' al-wujûd* (continuance of existence). See below p. 45f.
- 111 This is al-Ghazâlî's *kamâl al-wujûd* (perfect existence). See below p. 46.
- 112 Cf. Ibn Sînâ, *al-Shifâ' (al-ilâhiyyât)*, ed. G. Anawati and Sa'îd Zâ'id, Cairo 1960, p. 355f. *Idem*, *Kitâb al-najât*, ed. Majid Fakhri, Beirut 1985, p. 265.
- 113 According to Plato (*Theaetetus*, 176), to imitate God means to be righteous and wise. Cf. Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, part III, the end of ch. 54. Pines' trans., Chicago 1963, vol. II, p. 638.

- 114 Ibn Sînâ, *Risâla*, pp. 17–27. Fackenheim, *A Treatise*, pp. 222–228.
- 115 Morewedge, 'Emanationism,' part II, p. 16.
- 116 This is the view of H. James, R. A. Nicholson, G. G. Scholem and others, which stands in contradistinction to the view of W. T. Stace. P. Morewedge, 'Ṣûfism, Neoplatonism, and Zaehner's Theistic Theory of Mysticism,' in *Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism*, ed. P. Morewedge, New York 1981, p. 233.
- 117 *Ibid.*, p. 231.
- 118 Neoplatonic notions may have reached Ṣûfism through Christian Syriac scholars. Abdel-Kader, *Al-Junayd*, p. 13f.
- 119 Zaehner, *Mysticism*, p. 160 at the bottom.
- 120 Cf. Schimmel, *Studien*, p. 19f.
- 121 See H. Ritter's list of Arabic and Persian works on profane and mystic love. *Philologika* VII, 'Arabische und persische Schriften über profane und die mystische Liebe,' *Der Islam* 21 (1933), pp. 84–109.
- 122 Smith, *Râbi'a*, p. 121. Asked about Qur'ân 2.165 ('Yet there be men who take to themselves compeers apart from God, loving them as God is loved.' trans. Arberry), one of the exegetes said that the unbeliever sees his object of worship, then loves him, while the believer loves his object of love in order to see Him in Paradis. Shaydhala1, fol. 13b.
- 123 See below pp. 62–65.
- 124 Smith, *Râbi'a*, pp. 121, 126, 131.
- 125 *Ibid.*, p. 122.
- 126 *Ibid.*, pp. 123–125.
- 127 That worldly matters are obstacles to attain true love is characteristic of early Ṣûfism. Schimmel, *Studien*, p. 31.
- 128 *Ibid.*, p. 131f.
- 129 Not all the Ṣûfis place the love for God as the highest station. For example, the great Ḥanbalite Ṣûfî al-Anṣârî al-Harawî (d. 481/1088), demotes love to the sixty-first of one hundred stations. Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 174. However, his interpreter Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya considers love as the spirit of each station and act and, moreover, as the soul of Islam (*nafs al-islâm*) to such an extent that love for God is the condition for being a Muslim (*man lâ maḥabbata lahu lâ islâma lahu*). *Madârij*, vol. III, p. 20.
- 130 *Nuṣûṣ ṣûfiyya ghayr manshûra li-shaqîq al-balkhî, ibn 'aṭṭâ, al-niffarî*, ed. P. Nwyia, Beirut 1986, pp. 17–22.



- 131 Ernst, 'The Stages of Love,' p. 440f.
- 132 Smith, *al-Muḥāsibî*, ch. 14. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 54f.
- 133 A similar notion is expressed by a contemporary of al-Muḥāsibî called Aḥmad ibn Abî al-Ḥawârî (d. 230/844): 'A man is unable to love God unless God begins to love him.' However, al-Ḥawârî adds that when God sees that a man strives to satisfy Him, He begins to love him. Al-Sulamî, *Ṭabaqât*, p. 101.
- 134 Al-Iṣbahânî, *Hilyat*, vol. X, p. 76f. In al-Daylamî (*Kitâb 'atf*, p. 32), al-Muḥāsibî is said to have stated that the beginning of love is expressed through one's mentioning of God's favors to human beings.
- 135 Al-Iṣbahânî, *Hilyat*, p. 78.
- 136 *Ibid.*, p. 80.
- 137 Al-Daylamî, *Kitâb 'atf*, p. 69, para. 244. Ernst, 'Rûzbihân Baqlî,' p. 184. Rûzbihân Baqlî expresses the connection between beauty and love in the following statement: 'Love and beauty made a pact in pre-eternity never to be separate from one another.' Quoted by Ernst in *Rûzbihân Baqlî: Mysticism*, p. 5.
- 138 Al-Sulamî, *Ṭabaqât*, p. 18. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 101, 163. Shaydhala1, fol. 60a.
- 139 For al-Junayd and his teachings Abdel-Kader, *al-Junayd*.
- 140 According to Abû Yazîd al-Bisṭâmî (d. 262/874), the renowned proponent of monism, divine love is only a preliminary step toward the experience of absolute unity, for when all is one, there is no place for love whose nature necessitates the activity of two entities. Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, p. 105f.
- 141 In this verse human souls swore alliance (*mîthâq*) to God before He created their bodies; they testified that God is their Lord. Concerning the descent of the soul to this world, the difference between Plotinus and al-Junayd is that the former believes that the soul descended by its own choice, while al-Junayd believes that God caused it to descend. Abdel-Kader, *al-Junayd*, p. 112.
- 142 Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, pp. 138–143.
- 143 Abdel-Kader, *al-Junayd*, p. 113.
- 144 Al-Sarrâj, *Kitâb al-luma'*, p. 305. Zaehner, *ibid.*, p. 149. The notion of the pre-existence of man's soul in God is found in Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. Zaehner, *Mysticism*, p. 167.

- 145 Zaehner, *ibid.*, p. 145f.
- 146 Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 71–73. Cf. Shaydhala1, fols. 141b–142a, 144a. See below the end of al-Sarrâj's section.
- 147 Ernst, 'Rûzbihân Baqlî,' pp. 181–189. For Rûzbihân Baqlî's life, works and tradition see Ernst, *Rûzbihân Baqlî: Mysticism*, pp. IX–XI, 1–15.
- 148 See above p. 9 and Smith, *Studies*, p. 59f.
- 149 *Ibid.*, p. 84.
- 150 *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 62. Sumnûn is reported to have said that God created each animal with a portion of love for Him. Shaydhala1, fol. 114b. According to Hujwîrî, Sumnûn says that 'Love is the principle and foundation of the Path to God Most High. The states and stations are abodes [all related to love]; in whichever abode the seeker resides, it is appropriate that it should end, except for the stage of love. In no way is it appropriate that this should come to an end, as long as the Path exists.' Quoted by Ernst in 'The Stages of love,' p. 441.
- 151 Wudd can also be understood as love, or one of the characteristics of love. Cf. Schimmel, *Studien*, p. 39.
- 152 Al-Sarrâj, *Kitâb al-luma'*, p. 58, ll. 10–12.
- 153 *Ibid.*, ll. 12–15.
- 154 Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 137.
- 155 *Ibid.*, p. 58, l. 20–p. 59, l. 3.
- 156 See above p. 10.
- 157 Al-Sarrâj, *ibid.*, p. 59, ll. 8–19. Schimmel, *Studien*, p. 21.
- 158 Al-Qushayrî, *al-Risâla*, p. 144. Trans. by B. R. Von Schlegell, *Principles of Sufism*, Berkeley 1990, p. 326f.
- 159 Cf. a saying by Sumnûn al-Muḥibb: 'One does not express a view on a thing only by what is more delicate than this thing, and there is no thing more delicate than love' (*lâ shay'a araqqu min al-maḥabba*). Al-Sulamî, *Ṭabaqât*, p. 196. Cf. Shaydhala1, fol. 35b, 116. Stace (*The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 13) explains that since mystical experience involves neither the senses nor the intellect, 'it cannot be described or analyzed in terms of any of the elements of the sensory-intellectual consciousness, with which it is wholly incommensurable. This is the reason why mystics always say that their experiences are "ineffable". All words in all languages are the products of our sensory-intellectual consciousness and express or describe its elements or some combinations of them. But as these elements (with the



- doubtful exception of emotions) are not found in the mystical consciousness, it is felt to be impossible to describe it in any words whatever. In spite of this the mystics do describe their experiences in round-about ways, at the same time telling us that the words they use are inadequate.' Pointing out, like many other *Ṣūfīs*, the impossibility of defining love objectively, the famous *Ḥanbalite* scholar Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350), states that the definition of love is its very existence. *Madārij*, vol. III, p. 7. Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 105. Hence people speaks only of the causes, requirements, signs, testimonies, results, and rules of love. *Madārij*, *ibid.*, p. 8.
- 160 Al-Qushayrī seems to use this word which literally means 'to encompass' in the meaning of perfect perception of God. This understanding is proved by the following sentence. Both Abdel-Kader (*Al-Junayd*, p. 38: 'possession') and Von Schlegell (p. 328: 'enjoyment') failed to translate this word correctly in the light of its context.
- 161 Al-Qushayrī, *Risāla*, p. 144, ll. 16–20.
- 162 Al-Qushayrī, *ibid.*, pp. 148–150.
- 163 Unlike al-Ghazālī, who puts the station of love immediately after trust in God (*tawakkul*), in al-Makkī contentment (*riḍā*) comes after trust in God and then comes love. For al-Ghazālī, contentment, longing for, and intimacy are the results of love. However, both scholars agree that love for God is man's highest mystical goal. Cf. Mohamed Ahmed Sherif, *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue*, Albany 1975, p. 145.
- 164 Al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, vol. II, part 3, p. 74, ll. 5–8.
- 165 See above p. 14.
- 166 Al-Makkī, *ibid.*, p. 73f.
- 167 There appears a sentence (*ibid.*, p. 73, ll. 22–23) that alludes to the definition of love as belief in God's unity and obedience to His precepts. 'Their different kinds of contemplation of God's unity, and their continuance of adhering to His ordinances . . . does not derive but from love.' Since belief derives from love and these two elements (contemplation of God's unity and adhering to His ordinances) also derive from love, one may conclude that both elements constitute belief.
- 168 *Ibid.*, p. 74, ll. 4–5.
- 169 Sahl ibn Abdallāh al-Tustarī regards continuance of *dhikr* as one of the most proper signs of the love for God (*min aṣāḥ*

- 'alāmāt al-maḥabba dawām dhikr al-maḥbūb*). Shaydhala2, fol. 11a.
- 170 *Ibid.*, pp. 74–82.
- 171 Ma'rūf al-Karkhī (d. 200/815) was one of the first *Ṣūfīs* to speak about the love for God. According to him, one cannot acquire love for God, but receives it as a gift from Him. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 53. *Idem*, *Studien*, p. 21f.
- 172 Al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, p. 83, ll. 5–6. Cf. Shaydhala1, fol. 40b.
- 173 Sometimes al-Daylamī finds connections between the philosophers' views and the *Ṣūfīs*. *Kitāb 'atf*, p. 25, para. 91.
- 174 *Kitāb 'atf*, p. 6.
- 175 *Ibid.*, pp. 6–10.
- 176 Plotinus, *Enneads*, V, 8.8.
- 177 Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. I, part 1, p. 200.
- 178 *Kitāb 'atf*, p. 10f.
- 179 *Ibid.*, p. 25, para. 90, p. 68, para. 241.
- 180 *Ibid.*, p. 15. By *iṭṭisāl* al-Daylamī means some kind of connection and not ontological union with God.
- 181 The notion of God's self-love was accepted in later *Ṣūfism* as a result of Neoplatonic influence. Bell, *Love Theory*, pp. 71–73. For a similar idea in Al-Ghazālī see below p. 83.
- 182 *Ibid.*, pp. 37–39.
- 183 *Ibid.*, p. 45f.
- 184 *Ibid.*, p. 56, para. 210.
- 185 *Ibid.*, pp. 48–53.
- 186 Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin*, vol. II, p. 378. Kaḥḥāla mentions a book written by al-Shaydhala on love entitled *Maṣāri' al-'ushshâq fî shâri' al-ashwâq*, and another book on love is mentioned by al-Shaydhala himself entitled *Salwat al-'ushshâq wa-rawḍat al-mushtâq*. Shaydhala1, fol. 117b.
- 187 Shaydhala1, fols. 65a, 90b, 112, 124a, 127b, 135b, 137b, 140b–141a, 146b, 161.
- 188 *Ibid.*, fols. 72b, 84a, 95a, 97a, 98a, 107a, 111a, 119b, 122a, 128a, 130a, 136a, 150b–151a, 179a.
- 189 *Ibid.*, fol. 164b.
- 190 *Ibid.*, fol. 11a.
- 191 *Ibid.*, fols. 125a, 127a, 130b, 133a, 159b, 166b.
- 192 *Ibid.*, fols. 19b, 21a.
- 193 *Ibid.*, fols. 101a, 136b, 141b–142b, 159a.



- 194 *Ibid.*, fols. 176a–177a.  
 195 *Ibid.*, fol. 177.  
 196 Smith, *Studies*, chs. I–V. *Idem*, *Al-Muḥāsibī*, pp. 82–84.  
 197 Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 47.  
 198 Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, pp. 106–109. According to Zaehner, al-Bisṭāmī's monism seems to have been directly derived from the Vedānta. *Mysticism*, pp. 161ff. H. Corbin opposes the derivation of monistic trends in Ṣūfism from Indian monism. *Le paradoxe du monothéisme*, Paris 1981. This work was first published in *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 45 (1976), Leiden 1980, pp. 69–133.

## II AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S THEORY OF DIVINE LOVE

- 1 The full name of the book is: 'The Book of Love, Longing, Intimacy and Contentment' (*Kitāb al-maḥabba wa'l-shawq wa'l-uns wa'l-riḍā*). It constitutes the sixth book of the fourth volume of *Iḥyā'*.
- 2 In the *Iḥyā'* itself this subject appears in the second volume in a book entitled 'Book of the Manners of Friendship and Love' (*Kitāb ādāb al-ulfa wa'l-ṣuḥba*). Both *Kitāb al-arba'īn fī uṣūl al-dīn*, an Arabic summary of the *iḥyā'*, and *Kīmiyā al-sa'āda*, a Persian summary of the *Iḥyā'*, contain discussions on divine love which as a rule do not deviate from what he says in *Kitāb al-maḥabba*. (Cf. *The Alchemy of Happiness*, trans. from the Hindustani by C. Field, London 1983, pp. 105–122.) Other Ghazālīan treatises which deal with this subject matter in a fragmentary way or with related matters will be mentioned in the course of our presentation.
- 3 See, for example, Smith, *Rābi'a*, p. 113.
- 4 As we have shown, al-Ghazālī's arrangement of the stations is different from that of Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī who places *riḍā* before love and not as a fruit of love. See above p. 148, n. 163.
- 5 This view was mainly associated with the Ḥanbalites. See above Introduction, p. 16.
- 6 *Iḥyā'*, vol. IV, p. 294.
- 7 Cf. the Jewish stand. Introduction p. 5f.
- 8 In the light of his very short polemic against the deniers of love, it seems that he ascribes little importance to their views.

- 9 Translations of Qur'ān are usually taken from A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, Oxford 1983.
- 10 'What belief is? Belief means that God and His messenger are more lovable to you than anything else.'
- 11 *Iḥyā'*, *ibid.*, p. 295f.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 296, ll. 10–11.
- 13 From the context it is very clear that by *ma'rifa* he does not mean *gnosis*, that is mystical knowledge. Schimmel defines *gnosis* as 'knowledge that is not reached by discursive reason but is a higher understanding of the divine mystery.' *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 130.
- 14 The notion that the love for God is based on knowledge often occurs in Greek philosophy. Consequently, only those few who are trained in philosophy may reach the rank of Love. Walzer, 'Aspects,' p. 614. As many other Greek notions, it passes to Jewish and Muslim thinkers. See, for example, A. Eran, *From Simple Faith to Sublime Faith – Ibn Daud's Pre-Maimonidean Thought* (in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1998, p. 281. Also Maimonides says: 'Love is according to the measure of perception' (*inna al-maḥabba 'alā qadr al-idrāk*). *The Guide*, part 3, ch. 51, p. 457, l. 4. Pines' trans., vol. II, p. 621, l. 6: 'Love is proportionate to apprehension.' Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, part 4, p. 206, ll. 24ff. Possibly, al-Ghazālī's *Kitāb al-maḥabba* served as al-Rāzī's source. The famous mystic and poet Umar ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1234) makes a distinction between knowledge which precedes love and knowledge which follows love. The former is more perfect than the latter, for it deals with the absolute entity. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ḥilmī, *Ibn al-Fāriḍ wa'l-ḥubb al-ilāhī*, Cairo 1945, p. 177.
- 15 Introduction p. 21f.
- 16 *Iḥyā'*, *ibid.*, p. 296, l. 20. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 280. Cf. Maimonides, *The Guide*, ed. Joel, p. 462, ll. 16–17. For the term '*ishq*' see Introduction p. 17ff.
- 17 Al-Ghazālī's attitude toward music is fully elaborated in the eighth book of the second volume of the *Iḥyā'* entitled 'The Book of the Manners of Listening to Music and the States which Follow It' (*Kitāb ādāb al-samā' wa'l-wajd*). *Wajd* in al-Ghazālī means the states one finds (*wajada*) in himself after listening to music. This book was translated into English by D. B. Macdonald in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1901), pp. 195–252, 705–48, (1902), pp. 1–22 ('Emotional religion in Islam as affected by music



and singing, being a translation of a book of the *Ihyâ' 'ulûm ad-dîn* of al-Ghazâlî with analysis, annotation and appendices').

Al-Ghazâlî discusses the question of whether it is permissible to listen to music or not. Taking into account textual and rational considerations he draws the conclusion that listening to music and singing is permissible. As for the rational argument, it is built on an analogy to the pleasure taken by the other senses; just as it is allowable to take pleasure from seeing beautiful things, so it is regarding hearing beautiful sounds. Besides, God's creation supplies us with pleasant sounds, such as the birds' singing, which are not forbidden to hear. Musical instruments, like flutes, are imitations of the sounds created by God, hence listening to them is permissible. The Qur'ân teaches that 'The most disgusting voice is the ass's' (31.19), meaning that it praises the beautiful voices. Listening to music, says al-Ghazâlî, is forbidden only if it leads to violation of God's laws and to corruption, for example, drinking wine. Music exercises influence on man, it makes him feel happiness, sorrow and so on. Whoever is not moved by music is ill-tempered (*fâsid al-mizâj*), furthermore, he is remote from spirituality (*ba'îd 'an al-rûḥâniyya*). Music moves only whoever has an inborn faculty which reacts to music. The connection of listening to music to divine love is expressed through the statement that each existent except God is His wonderful creation. Consequently, the more the music, God's creation, is beautiful, the more it moves man and makes him love God. *Ihyâ'*, vol. II, pp. 270–280.

18 For al-Ghazâlî the importance of a notion lies in its meaning, not in the terms denoting it. Therefore many times his terminology is imprecise. *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 307, l. 29–p. 308, l. 2. *Idem*, *Mishkât*, pp. 122, 152. Hillenbrand, 'Some Aspects,' p. 262.

19 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 296f. 'The heart is the knower of God' *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 2. *Idem*, *The Incoherence*, p. 214, l. 11–p. 215, l. 2. Cf. al-Râzî, *al-Mabâḥith al-mashriqiyya*, vol. II, pp. 441–443.

20 The notion that the first inclination of the animal is to preserve itself is Stoic. Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, III, 16. Van Den Bergh, *The Incoherence*, vol. II, p. 89, l. 3 from the bottom.

21 Al-Ghazâlî is very fond of using this formula in various contexts. For example, man is composed of many parts, but in relation to humanity he is one. *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 246.

22 For the meaning of *sunna* as a rule see Abrahamov, 'Causality', p. 93f. The notion that every entity desires its perfection is expressed by Ibn Sînâ. See above p. 22. Morewedge, 'Emanationism,' part 2, p. 11. For Ibn Sînâ's influence on al-Ghazâlî see my 'Ibn Sînâ's Influence on al-Ghazâlî's Non-philosophical works,' *Abr-Nahrain* 29 (1991), pp. 1–17.

23 Van Den Bergh, 'The 'Love of God,' p. 311.

24 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 297. Van Den Bergh (*ibid.*, pp. 308–311) traces back the notions appearing in this section of al-Ghazâlî's work to Stoic and Platonic sources. Diotima, Socrates' interlocutor in the *Symposium*, says: 'Marvel not then at the love which all men have of their offspring; for that universal love and interest is for the sake of immortality.' *Symposium*, 208. Jowett's trans., vol. I, p. 578, l. 4 from the bottom.

25 Cf. Van Den Bergh, *ibid.*, p. 311. It worth noting that, in al-Ghazâlî's view, love caused by *iḥsân* characterizes the commoners (*al-âmma*), while love caused by the beloved's essence (beauty and other qualities) characterizes the élite. *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 338, ll. 21–26. The reason for this is very probably the fact that the knowledge of the beloved's essence and qualities requires intellectual capacity which the masses lack. According to Miskawaih, pleasure, gain, and good are causes of love. *Tahdhîb al-akhlâq*, Cairo 1959, p. 139. Walzer, 'Aspects,' p. 613.

26 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 298, ll. 15–25. Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî proves how pleasure cannot be explained through causes (*ghayr mu'allal*). If a man were asked for what purpose he earns money, he would answer: to eat and drink. He would further say that eating and drinking serve the goal of gaining pleasure and rejecting pain. But there is no reason to explain why a man seeks for pleasure and hates pain. If each thing were sought for the purpose of another, there would be either an endless chain of causes and effects or a vicious circle, both of which are absurd. Therefore pleasure is sought for by virtue of itself. *Mafâtîḥ al-ghayb* to Qur'ân 2.165, vol. II, part 4, p. 206.

27 Van Den Bergh, 'The Love of God,' p. 312.



28 Like Miskawaih, al-Ghazâlî uses *jamâl* as well as *ḥusn* to designate beauty. Hillenbrand, 'Some Aspects,' p. 262, n. 43. Although, as Hillenbrand writes, Al-Ghazâlî has no 'fully-fledged aesthetic theory,' it is important for the present study to set forth his basic statements concerning beauty. The following is based on her article (pp. 251–3) which derives its materials mainly from al-Ghazâlî's *Kîmiyâ' al-sa'âda*. For al-Ghazâlî, the human being's beauty serves as a key for the knowledge of God's greatness. Man is a microcosm, a model of the whole creation which was built according to a wonderful design. Notwithstanding, beauty can deviate man from the right way, for example, if one marries a beautiful but unchast woman. In *Iḥyâ'* (vol. II, p. 37), al-Ghazâlî counts three basic qualities of a good woman. Physical beauty stands in the third place after chastity and good character. Just as one can learn of God's wisdom through observing man's body, so with regard to the wonderful design of the macrocosm which tells us about God's wisdom and greatness. In the discussion which follows, al-Ghazâlî deals with abstract beauty and its function in the divine love.

The Qur'ân does not refer to God as beautiful. This appellation occurs in a tradition which states that 'God is beautiful who loves beauty' (*inna allâh jamîl yuḥibbu al-jamâl*). Gimaret, *Les noms divins en Islam – exégèse lexicographique et théologique*, Paris 1988, p. 215. Al-Ghazâlî connects God's beauty to His greatness stating that 'when the attributes of greatness are referred to the faculty which perceives them (*al-baṣîra al-mudrika*), they are called beauty, and whoever is described by them is called beautiful.' Originally, the name beautiful refers to the external form (*ṣûra ṣâhira*) which is perceived by sight, for external form fits sight. Then 'beautiful' applies to internal form (*ṣûra bâṭina*) which is perceived by insight (*baṣîra*). When the internal form is perfect, it is beautiful in relation to the insight which perceives it. One has greater pleasure in perceiving internal forms than in perceiving external ones. Since God is the source of all beauty and perfection in the world, He is the true and absolute beautiful (*al-jamîl al-ḥaqq al-mutlaq*). Hence whoever perceives God, takes the greatest pleasure. Al-Ghazâlî, *al-Maqṣad al-asnâ fî sharḥ ma'ânî asmâ' allâh al-ḥusnâ*, ed. F. A. Shehadî, Beirut 1971, p. 126f.

- 29 Van Den Bergh, 'The Love for God,' p. 312f.
- 30 For al-Dabbâgh's opinion on the basic virtues see below p. 10.
- 31 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, pp. 298–300.
- 32 Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 109. The translation is taken from A. J. Arberry's English version of Ibn Ḥazm's *Tawq al-ḥamâma*, London 1953, p. 27. Cf. Giffen, p. 55. Al-Daylamî, *Kitâb 'atf*, p. 105.
- 33 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. II (*Kitâb âdâb al-ṣuḥba*), p. 161.
- 34 Plato, *Symposium*, 189–193. See above p. 1.
- 35 Jowett's trans., vol. I, p. 62.
- 36 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. II, p. 162. It is worth noting that some theologians deny the possibility of affinity between God and man. In the light of their position, one can explain the fact that some Ṣûfis, like al-Qushayrî and Abû Ṭâlib al-Makkî, do not mention affinity as a cause of man's love for God, and Hujwîrî regards it as a cause of physical love. Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 110.
- 37 *Rasâil ikhwân al-ṣafâ'*, vol. III, p. 275. See above p. 18 and below p. 114.
- 38 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 300.
- 39 This reminds one of Ibn Sînâ's notion that whatever is necessarily existent by virtue of another (*wâjib al-wujûd bi-ghayrihi*), is possibly existent by virtue of itself (*mumkin al-wujûd bi-dhâtihi*). *Kitâb al-najât*, p. 262.
- 40 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 301, ll. 15–16.
- 41 *Ibid.*, ll. 17–19.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 254.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 302, ll. 2–20.
- 44 Van Den Bergh, 'The Love of God,' p. 315. Ibn Sînâ defines generosity as giving not for the sake of reward. *Al-Shifâ'*, *Ilâhiyyât*, VI, 5, p. 296.
- 45 Abrahamov, 'Causality,' p. 89.
- 46 It is worth noting that according to Aristotle there is no connection between God and evil, for God is an eternal being. *Metaphysics*, VII–IX. Eran, pp. 236–238. Cf. al-Ghazâlî, *Tahâfut*, p. 94.
- 47 *de natura deorum*, II, 121, and 120–138.
- 48 *de finibus bonorum et malorum*, III, 18.
- 49 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 303, l. 20–p. 304, l. 1.
- 50 *Ibid.*, p. 304, ll. 9–19.
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 304, l. 20–p. 305, l. 9.
- 52 Cf. Hillenbrand, 'Some Aspects,' p. 262.



- 53 *Ihyâ'*, p. 305, l. 20–p. 306, l. 12.
- 54 As we shall see below, it is not accidental that knowledge occupies the first place in the list of God's attributes which man has to imitate.
- 55 Cf. Maimonides, *The Guide*, p. 471. Pines' trans., vol. II, p. 638.
- 56 Al-Ghazâlî refers to a statement attributed to the Prophet: 'Imitate God's virtues.'
- 57 For a discussion of this tradition in the context of anthropomorphism see W. M. Watt, 'Created in His Image,' *Glasgow University Oriental Society* 18 (1959–60), pp. 38–49.
- 58 Zaehner's translation in *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, p. 148. In his *Mizân al-'amal* (p. 400) the tradition of the supererogatory works serves al-Ghazâlî to show that the wayfarer should not be satisfied with only carrying out the precepts, but he should carry out supererogatory acts in order to deviate from the seduction of this world. Like al-Ghazâlî, al-Shaydhala expresses the idea that love means the replacement of the lover's attributes by the Beloved's and connects it with this tradition. However, unlike al-Ghazâlî, he explains the citation of this tradition in the present context. It is not real replacement, for eternal attributes cannot inhere in created beings, therefore it means that man carries out his works in compliance with God's will and satisfaction. In other words, God's attributes serve man as criteria for action. Shaydhala1, fol. 100b.
- 59 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 306, l. 23–p. 307, l. 9.
- 60 In a commentary on the *Timaeus*, Chalcidius (the fourth century) states that 'knowledge is common to us with Divinity, and we are said to be children of God.' Quoted by Altmann in 'The Delphic Maxim,' p. 6.
- 61 For the various interpretations of this dictum in Islamic and Jewish philosophy see Altmann, 'The Delphic Maxim,' pp. 1–40.
- 62 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 8–11. Contrary to Altmann, I have hesitated to include in my discussion books which are ascribed to al-Ghazâlî, such as *al-maḍnûn al-saghîr* and *al-maḍnûn al-kabîr*, but suspected by modern scholars of being inauthentic. Cf. M. Bouyges, *Essai de Chronologie des Oeuvres de al-Ghazâlî*, ed. M. Allard, Beirut 1959, pp. 51–5. However, concerning the *Mishkât*, I tend to agree with the view of Abû al-'Alâ Afîfî who accepts its genuineness in the

- introduction to his edition of the book (Cairo 1964) against the view of W. M. Watt who rejects the authenticity of the last section of the *Mishkât* (the Veils section). 'A Forgery in al-Ghazâlî's *Mishkât*?' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1949), pp. 5–22.
- 63 Altmann ('The Delphic Maxim,' p. 11f) suggests such possibilities.
- 64 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 307, ll. 12–20.
- 65 'An explanation that the highest and the most important pleasure is the knowledge of God and the looking at His splendid face and that it is inconceivable that one should (not) prefer another pleasure to it unless one is deprived of this pleasure.' *Ibid.*, p. 307, ll. 21–22. The word 'not' must be redundant.
- 66 Al-Ghazâlî's reason for this appellation is Qur'ân 39.22 which reads: 'Is he whose breast God has expanded unto Islam, so he walks in a light from his Lord?' (trans. Arberry) In *Mishkât* (pp. 122ff), al-Ghazâlî explains why it is more appropriate to call the intellect light than to call the eye, meaning the faculty of sight, light.
- 67 See n. 18 above.
- 68 Morewedge, 'Emanationism,' part II, p. 7.
- 69 See above p. 44.
- 70 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 308.
- 71 *Ibid.*, p. 311.
- 72 *Ibid.*, p. 310, l. 8.
- 73 *Ibid.*, p. 310f. Among these statements appears the famous poem of Râbi'a:
- I have loved Thee with two loves, a selfish love  
and a love that is worthy (of Thee),  
As for the love which is selfish, I occupy myself  
therein with remembrance of Thee to the  
exclusion of all others,  
As for that which is worthy of Thee, therein Thou  
raisest the veil that I may see Thee.  
Yet is there no praise to me in this or that,  
But the praise is to Thee, whether in that or this.
- Trans. by M. Smith in her *Râbi'a*, p. 126. Cf. al-Makkî, *Qût al-qulûb*, vol. III, p. 84. Ernst, 'The Stages of Love,' p. 439.
- 74 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 309. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 250. Cf. Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists*, p. 16.



- 75 See, for example, *Tafsîr Ibn Kathîr* (Beirut 1970) to Qur'ân 10.26 (vol. III, p. 497f) and 75.22–23 (vol. VII, p. 171).
- 76 A. K. Tuft, *The Origins and Development of the Controversy Over 'Ru'ya' in Medieval Islam and its Relation to Contemporary Visual Theory*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of California 1979, University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor 1982.
- 77 The most famous verses of these are Qur'ân 75.22–23: 'On that day faces will be luminous looking at their Lord.'
- 78 B. Abrahamov, 'The *Bi-lâ kayfa* Doctrine and its Foundations in Islamic Theology,' *Arabica* 42,3 (1995), pp. 365–379.
- 79 Ibn Abî al-Izz, *Sharḥ al-'aqîda al-ṭahâwiyya*, ed. Abdallâh ibn 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkî and Shu'ayb al-Arnaûṭ, Beirut 1991, vol. I, p. 207.
- 80 B. Abrahamov, *Anthropomorphism & Interpretation of the Qur'ân in the Theology of al-Qâsim ibn Ibrâhîm, Kitâb al-Mustarshid*, Leiden 1996, p. 15f.
- 81 Cf. Plato, *Phaedo*, 66f. Jowett's trans., vol. II, p. 205f: 'It has been proved to us by experience that if we would have pure knowledge of anything we must be quit of the body – the soul in herself must behold things in themselves: and then we shall attain the wisdom which we desire, and of which we say that we are lovers; not while we live, but after death . . . In this present life, I reckon that we make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible intercourse or communion with the body . . .' Thus according to Plato, in this world one can only come close to knowledge, but pure knowledge can be attained only after death.
- 82 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 312f.
- 83 Literally *mushâhada* means seeing, but in our context it can be rendered as intellectual seeing or contemplation. The connection between knowing God and seeing Him was already expressed by Isaac of Nineveh, a Christian mystic of the seventh century A.D. in the following statement: 'You see God as soon as you know Him.' Smith, *Studies*, p. 211.
- 84 *Ibid.*, p. 313, ll. 10–12. Abrahamov, 'al-Ghazâlî's Supreme Way,' p. 156. According to al-Ghazâlî, man's knowledge is not erased when he dies. *Ibid.*, n. 69. *Iḥyâ'*, vol. III, p. 22. *Mishkât*, 127f. It is worth noting that the connection

- between love for God and knowledge or gnosis appears in the teachings of early Ṣūfîs. Abû Ḥâmid Aḥmad ibn Ḥaḍrawaih (240/854) says that 'the reality of love is to know God in the heart' (*ḥaqîqat al-maḥabba al-ma'rifa lahu bi'l-qalb*). Shaydhala, fol. 89a. In al-Sulamî (*Ṭabaqât*, p. 105) an inverse formula of this statement is introduced: 'The reality of knowledge is to love God in the heart.'
- 85 The difference between a prophet and a saint is a difference of function. A prophet is an individual to whom the real meanings of things are revealed (*kûshifa bi-ḥaqâ'iq al-umûr*) and who deals with the improvement of mankind, while a saint shares with the prophet the first characteristic but lacks the second. *Iḥyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 25, l.30–p. 26, l. 1.
- 86 For the notion that man's heart or soul is like a mirror see H. Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, tr. from the French by L. Sherrad, London 1993, p. 260. Idem, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, tr. from the French by W. R. Trask, Dallas 1980, pp. 152f, 239f. Ibn Sînâ regards the rational soul as a polished mirror in which the forms of things are imprinted. *Risâla fî'l-kalâm 'alâ al-naḥs al-nâṭiqâ*, ed. Aḥmad Fu'âd al-Ahwânî, *Majallat al-kitâb*, 1952, p. 421. Cf. Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 581/1185), *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzân*, ed. N. Nader, Beirut 1963, p. 30. The origin of this image is most probably ancient Hellenism. H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies in al-Ghazâlî*, Jerusalem 1970, p. 313. For knowledge as light see F. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, Leiden 1970, ch. VI, pp. 155–93. In Greek and Islamic philosophical texts the Active Intellect is sometimes compared to light and sometimes to the sun. *Al-Fârâbî on the Perfect State. Abû Naṣr al-Fârâbî's Mabâdî' Ârâ Ahl al-madîna al-Fâḍila*, ed., tr., and comm. R. Walzer, Oxford 1985, p. 403. (henceforth: *Al-Fârâbî*, Walzer) Netton, *Allâh Transcendent*, p. 176f. This note was taken from my 'Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî's Philosophical Justification of Visiting Tombs,' *Al-Masâq – Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 11 (1999), p. 119, n. 31.
- 87 For this term in al-Ghazâlî see, for example, R. M. Frank, 'Al-Ghazâlî on *Taqîd*. Scholars, Theologians, and Philosophers,' *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften*, ed. F. Sezgin 7 (1991/2), pp. 207–252.
- 88 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. III, 13f.
- 89 I do not know why al-Ghazâlî points out that in sleep man can know only future events (in p. 21, l. 26 *ibid.*, he also



- mentions past events) and why he does not mention the content of revelation in man's other states.
- 90 Cf. Maimonides, *The Guide*, Introduction, (p. 3, l. 27). Pines' trans., vol. I, p. 7. According to Pines, the simile of lightning flashes for truth originates in Ibn Sînâ's *Kitâb al-ishârât wa'l-tanbîhât* (ed. J. Forget, Leiden 1892, p. 202f). 'The Limitations of Human Knowledge According to Al-Farabi, ibn Bajja, and Maimonides,' *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, ed. I. Twersky, Cambridge Mass. and London 1979, p. 89.
- 91 By the cause of knowledge al-Ghazâlî probably means that knowledge is created on the Preserved Tablet and hence the cause of its existence is God.
- 92 *Ihyâ'*, vol. III, p. 18f.
- 93 *Ibid.*, p. 19f.
- 94 Abdel-Kader, *Al-Junayd*, p. 84. Al-Sarrâj, *Kitâb al-luma'*, p. 426.
- 95 These motives are called *wasâwîs* (sing. *waswâs* literally 'whisper'), and the Devil (*al-shayṭân*) is responsible for their introduction into man's heart. *Ihyâ'*, vol. III, p. 27, l. 4. The origin of the term is Qur'ân 114., 7.20, 20.120.
- 96 *wa-anâ ayḍan rubbamâ intahat bi al-riyâḍa wa'l-muwâẓaba ilayhi. Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 20, l. 14. It seems to me that *ilayhi* refers to this false claim.
- 97 *Lâ b'sa ba'da dhâlika bi'l-intizâr li-mâ lam yankashif li-sâ'ir al-'ulamâ' fa-'asâhu yankashifu ba'da dhâlika bi'l-mujâhada. Ibid.*, l. 17.
- 98 *Ibid.*, pp. 23–26.
- 99 For al-Suhrawardî's view see Wahlbridge, *The Science of Mystic Lights*, pp. 35, 38.
- 100 *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- 101 Six hundred years after al-Ghazâlî, the Swedish scientist, philosopher, and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) began his intellectual career as a scientist and then became a mystic. As Oliver Lodge writes in the introduction to Swedenborg's *The Divine Love and Wisdom* (p. xii) 'His scientific training in fact to some extent curbs, and controls his mysticism.' However, Swedenborg has not planned this process.
- 102 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 314, l. 22–p. 315, l. 1.
- 103 *Ibid.*, p. 315, ll. 5–9.
- 104 *Ibid.*, p. 316, ll. 21–23.

- 105 See for example Qur'ân 10.101: 'Observe what is in the heavens and in the earth.'
- 106 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, pp. 317–319. For the argument from design see H. A. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, New York and Oxford 1987, ch. 7. B. Abrahamov, *Al-Qâsim B. Ibrâhîm on the Proof of God's Existence – Kitâb al-Dalîl al-Kabîr*, Leiden 1990, pp. 1–13.
- 107 In compliance with Qur'ân 56.88–92, they are called respectively those who go astray (*ḍâlûn*), blameless people from the Companions of the Right (*ahl al-salâma min aṣḥâb al-yamîn*), and those who come near to God (*al-muqarrabûn*).
- 108 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, (ch. 7 of *Kitâb al-maḥabba*) p. 319f.
- 109 'Paradoxicality is one of the common characteristics of all mysticism.' Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 16.
- 110 For an elaboration on this topic, see al-Ghazâlî's *Kitâb al-ḥikma fî makhlûqât allâh*, in *Majmû'at rasâ'il al-imâm al-Ghazâlî*, Beirut 1996, pp. 7–46.
- 111 *Ihyâ'*, p. 320, l. 24–p. 321, l. 3.
- 112 *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 322, ll. 16–22.
- 113 *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 322, ll. 4–16. Cf. *Mishkât*, p. 138f.
- 114 In *Rawḍat al-tâlibîn* (p. 120), a treatise which is attributed to al-Ghazâlî, but suspected as spurious (M. Bouyges, *Essai de chronologie des oeuvres de al-Ghazali*, edited and updated by M. Allard, Beirut 1959, p. 91, n. 1.) the author states: 'Since everything except God exists and subsists by virtue of God, not by virtue of itself (*mawjûd bi-allâh wa-qâ'im bihi lâ bi-nafsihi*), its existence is metaphorical (*majâz*), and the existence of whoever subsists by virtue of itself and makes others subsist is real and true.'
- 115 Sometimes both terms are interchangeable. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 267, 368.
- 116 *Mysticism*, p. 159.
- 117 *Mishkât*, pp. 137–9.
- 118 Zaehner, *Mysticism*, p. 160.
- 119 *Mishkât*, p. 140f.
- 120 Smith, *Studies*, p. 200.
- 121 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 245f. *Idem*, *al-Maqṣad al-asnâ*, p. 58. Abrahamov, 'Al-Ghazâlî's Supreme Way,' p. 158–160.
- 122 Abdel-Kader, *al-Junayd*, pp. 55–57 of the Arabic text. The text was translated in pp. 176–178.



- 123 Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 15.
- 124 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 246, l. 8. Abrahamov, 'Al-Ghazâlî's Supreme Way,' p. 158.
- 125 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, ll. 26–28. Abrahamov, *ibid.*, p. 159.
- 126 Cf. Abarbanel (Leone Ebreo), *Dialoghi D'Amore*, trans. into Hebrew M. Dorman, Jerusalem 1983, the beginning of the first conversation.
- 127 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 322, l. 29–p. 323, l. 5.
- 128 The reader should pay attention to al-Ghazâlî's formulation. 'What is called seeing' means that it is a convention to call it seeing, but the real meaning is knowledge.
- 129 The notion that man's love for God never ends, for one cannot exhaust the riches of the infinite Being, was already expressed by Dhû al-Nûn al-Miṣrî (d. 245/859) who states that 'the end of love for whoever has no end is absurd' (Shaydhala1, fol. 81b) and by the famous proponent of monism Abû Yazîd al-Bisṭâmî (261/874). Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, p. 106. Zaehner advocates Indian influence on al-Bisṭâmî's monism, while Schimmel (*Mystical Dimensions*, p. 47f.) prefers the Islamic experience of *fanâ'* (annihilation) as his source.
- This notion was also expressed by al-Junayd who says that 'love for God is an excessive inclination without attainment' (*al-mahabba ifrâṭ al-mayl bi-lâ nayl*). Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, p. 512.
- On man's unending love for God says al-Niffarî (d. 354/965): 'One thing is, and one thing will be, and one thing will not be. The first is my loving thee, the second is thy seeing Me, the third thy ever knowing Me with complete gnosis.' *The Mawâqif and Mukhâṭabât of Muḥammad ibn 'Abdi 'L-Jabbâr al-Niffarî*, ed. and trans. A. J. Arberry, London 1935, p. 139 of the translation. The notion that *shawq* is an endless process was also expressed by Ibn Taymiyya's eminent disciple Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350). Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 169.
- 130 *Ihyâ'*, p. 323, l. 6–p. 324, l. 9.
- 131 The person whose love for God is mixed with love for other things, enjoys pleasure in Paradise commensurate to the measure of his love for God. Here he uses the famous metaphor of love as drinking wine which also expresses the pleasure of Paradise. Whoever loves only God, drinks pure wine. *Ibid.*, p. 334, ll. 17–22.

- 132 See Qur'ân 83.18–19.
- 133 Cf. al-Qushayrî, *al-Risâla*, p. 148.
- 134 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 329, l. 28, p. 331, l. 9.
- 135 See above p. 5f.
- 136 Contrary to the Christian dogma of *agape* according to which God loves every human being, whether he is righteous or wicked, and hence every human being must behave like Him, in the Qur'ân God hates evil people and infidels, and whoever loves Him must carry out His precepts.
- 137 Al-Ghazâlî defines *uns* as the heart's rejoicing caused by perceiving the presence of God. *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 339, ll. 19–29. Sometimes it is defined by Ṣûfîs as 'intimacy.' Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 132.
- 138 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 337, ll. 6–8.
- 139 For a discussion of this dictum which advocates theodicy and the reactions of later scholars to this doctrine, see E. L. Ormsby, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought – The Dispute over al-Ghazâlî's 'Best of All Possible Worlds'*, Princeton 1984.
- 140 Cf. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 45.
- 141 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 337, l. 11–p. 338, l. 12.
- 142 *Ibid.*, p. 338, ll. 13–18. Al-Saqafî is known for his discussions of mystical love. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 53.
- 143 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 340, l. 13: 'His body is with people, but not his heart' (*mukhâṭiṭ bi'l-badan munfarid bi'l-qalb*). Cf. Maimonides, *The Guide*, p. 457. Pines' trans., vol. II, p. 621.
- 144 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 347, l. 23. Hujwîrî states (in his *Kashf al-mahjûb*, p. 178): 'From the standpoint of ethics, satisfaction is the acquiescence of one who knows that giving and withholding are in God's knowledge, and firmly believes that God sees him in all circumstances. There are four classes of quietists: 1. those who are satisfied with God's gift (*aṭ'â*) which is gnosis (*ma'rifa*); 2. those who are satisfied with happiness (*ni'ma*), which is this world; 3. those who are satisfied with affliction (*balâ*), which consists of diverse probations; and 4. those who are satisfied with being chosen (*iṣṭifâ*), which is love (*mahabba*).
- 145 *Ibid.*, p. 347, l. 24–p. 348, l. 10, p. 350, ll. 25–30.
- 146 According to al-Ghazâlî's, God's unity means the origination of all things in Him. Abrahamov, 'Al-Ghazâlî's Supreme Way,' p. 158.
- 147 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 352, ll. 12–14.



- 148 For the theory of *kasb* in al-Asharî's writings see my 'A Re-examination of al-Asharî's Theory of *kasb* according to *Kitâb al-luma'*,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1989), pp. 210–221.
- 149 That God loves Himself is not a new idea; it goes back to Greek philosophy and appears in the Sûfî literature before al-Ghazâlî. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, pp. 554–557. See above p. 38.
- 150 For this Kalâm term see my 'Abd al-Jabbâr's Theory of Divine Assistance (*lutf*),' *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 16 (1993), p. 48, n. 40.
- 151 The notion that God's love for man is an eternal favor, which causes man to love Him, is expressed by al-Shaydhala. Shaydhala1, fols. 19b, 21–22a. See above p. 40.
- 152 *Ihyâ'*, *ibid.*, p. 329, ll. 24–25.
- 153 Cf. Walzer, 'Aspects,' pp. 609–611.
- 154 Singer, *The Nature of Love*, p. 73.
- 155 Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 150.

### III AL-DABBÂGH'S THEORY OF DIVINE LOVE

- 1 His full name is Abû Zayd 'Abd al-Rahmân ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alî ibn 'Abdallâh al-Anṣarî al-Mâlikî al-Qayrawânî known as al-Dabbâgh (d. 696/1296). He was a jurist, traditionist, and historian of al-Qayrawân and wrote a biographical book on its important personalities which is the source of *Ma'âlim al-îmân fî ma'rîfat ahl al-qayrawân* written by al-Qâsim ibn 'îsâ al-Nâjî (d. 837/1433). See Ritter's introduction to his edition of *Mashâriq*, p. 6 (*wâw*). According to Kaḥḥâla (*Mu'jam al-mu'allifîn*, Beirut 1993, vol. II, p. 117) he died in 689/1290 and his nickname is al-Dabbâgh. In M. Talbi's short article in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden 1981, Supplement, 3–4, p. 172) the date of death is 699/1300, and the nickname is al-Dabbâgh.
- 2 *Mashâriq*, p. 4, ll. 7–9.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 5, l. 12–p. 6, l. 12.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 20, l. 16. As a rule, in order to create a coherent presentation I have not followed the order of al-Dabbâgh's chapters in discussing his ideas.
- 5 'The proof that love includes all stations and states is that a man does not love a beloved except after he knows the perfection of the essence (*kamâl dhât*) of this beloved. Then

- this knowledge (*'ilm*) continues to be verified in him until it becomes profound knowledge (or gnosis). From this knowledge is derived desire and then longing for the beauty of this essence. The forbearance (*ṣabr*) of the difficulty of seeking the beloved follows from love, and in this circumstance a fear (*khawf*) of being veiled from the beloved as well as hope (*rajâ'*) to be near him arise in him. Also love causes contentment (*riḍâ'*) with the beloved's will, abstinence (*zuhd*) from other beings, belief in the beloved's being unique in his attributes of perfection, and complete trust in him.' *Mashâriq*, p. 20, ll. 2–9.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 19. Cf. Ernst, *Rûzbiḥân Baqlî: Mysticism*, p. 143f. For Muḥammad's light and its functions in the world see, for example, U. Rubin, 'Pre-existence and light – Aspects of the concept of Nûr Muḥammad,' *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975), pp. 62–119. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, index.
- 7 For the impossibility of defining love see p. 147f, n. 159 above.
- 8 *Mashâriq*, p. 20, l. 22, p. 21, l. 8.
- 9 See p. 161, n. 109 above.
- 10 *Mashâriq*, p. 21, l. 12–p. 22, l. 2. For the structure of definition, see Maimonides, *Introduction to Logic* (*Millot Ha-Higayon*), trans. into Hebrew by Moses ibn Tibbon and ed. by Leon Roth, Jerusalem 1965, p. 71.
- 11 *Mashâriq*, p. 22, ll. 3–4.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 22, l. 3, p. 23, l. 10.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 7, ll. 1–7. Hence, death brings about true and perfect perception of God and as a result true love. Cf. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, p. 533.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 7, ll. 7–9. See p. 64 above.
- 15 Al-Dabbâgh here refers to Galen's theory of the blending of the four humors (blood, phlegm, black bile, yellow bile) which determines a man's mental and emotional characteristics. For example, he whose temperament is dominated by yellow bile is characterized by anger. Galen, *That the Faculties of the Soul Are Consequent upon the Temperament of the Body*, ed. K. G. Kühn, Leipzig 1821–33, vol. IV, pp. 767–821. Galen, *Selected Works*, translated with an Introduction and Notes by P. N. Singer, Oxford 1997, pp. 150–176. D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition, Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, Leiden 1988, p. 75f. However, our author begins his explanation with Galen's natural theory but changes it into



religious theory by asserting that it is God who gives man his soul. In this case, God is said to act according to nature.

- 16 *Mashâriq*, p. 7, ll. 12–17.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 8, l. 11, p. 9, l. 11. For al-Dabbâgh's discussion of affinity see ch. 5 below.
- 18 Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 112.
- 19 This term is based on Qur'ân 89.27. *Mashâriq*, p. 9, ll. 16, 19.
- 20 For the notion that imagination sometimes impairs intellection, see F. Rahman, *Avicenna's De Anima (Arabic Text)*, London 1959, p. 172. Eran, p. 217.
- 21 The full Qur'ânic expression is *al-nafs al-ammâra bi'l-sû'* (Qur'ân 12.53).
- 22 Qur'ân 75.2.
- 23 The Şûfî is described as whoever walks (*sâlik*) on the path (*ṭarîqa*) towards his God. In the path he walks from one station (*maqâm*) to another. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 98ff.
- 24 *Mashâriq*, p. 10.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 11, ll. 4–7.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 11, l. 7–p. 12, l. 2.
- 27 The view that love brings about knowledge is ascribed in Shaydhala1, fol. 121a, to Abû 'Abdallâh Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl al-Balkhî (d. 319/931). According to him, the result of the love for God is two kinds of knowledge: a. knowledge about God, meaning knowledge of His names and attributes; and b. knowledge from God that is His ordinances.
- 28 By the term *wahm* al-Dabbâgh does not mean the technical term 'estimation', the 'faculty by which animals instinctively pursue certain things and avoid others,' but imagination. H. A. Wolfson, 'The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew Philosophic Texts,' *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion*, ed. I. Twersky and G. H. Williams, Cambridge Mass. 1973, p. 268. The article was first published in *Harvard Theological Review* 28 (1935), pp. 69–133. Cf. Ibn Sînâ, *al-Najât*, p. 202.
- 29 See p. 54 above.
- 30 Does *amr* represents Philo's *logos* as a second God is a much debated question. Altmann, 'The Delphic Maxim,' p. 12. Very probably the term reached al-Dabbâgh from al-Ghazâlî who used it as equivalent of *'âlam al-malakût*. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, p. 504. The notion that individual human

souls proceed from the World-Soul originates in Plotinus. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. I, part 2, p. 212.

- 31 As we have seen (p. 57 above), these two verses serve al-Ghazâlî to prove the affinity between God and man.
- 32 Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya traces this statement back to the Jewish lore. *Madârij*, vol. III, p. 26.
- 33 Elsewhere (*Mashâriq*, p. 112, l. 20) he calls man's soul 'a copy of the whole existence' (*nuskhat al-wujûd al-kullî*) through which man can prove God's existence.
- 34 *Mashâriq*, p. 12f.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 14, ll. 5–9.
- 36 While for Plotinus *Nous* is Beauty, (Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. I, part 2, p. 212), in al-Dabbâgh and al-Ghazâlî, true beauty applies only to God. This is an example of islamized Plotinus.
- 37 See p. 110 below.
- 38 For the internal senses, see Wolfson's article mentioned in n. 28.
- 39 The notion of the two mirrors appears also in al-Ghazâlî. See p. 64f above.
- 40 *Mashâriq*, p. 14, l. 12–p. 15, l. 1.
- 41 By this fitness al-Dabbâgh means the affinity between the secret posited in the soul, which attracts man to beauty, and the form.
- 42 He may mean by the 'perceiving soul' the rational faculty (*al-quwwa al-nâtîqa*).
- 43 *Mashâriq*, p. 15, l. 2–p. 16, l. 3.
- 44 *Ibid.*, p. 16, ll. 4–13.
- 45 Al-Fârâbî, *Ârâ'*, p. 406f.
- 46 *Mashâriq*, pp. 16–18.
- 47 One may consider a possible influence of al-Suhrawardî's Philosophy of Illumination (*ḥikmat al-ishrâq*) on al-Dabbâgh. According to al-Suhrawardî, God is the Light of Lights from which a series of emanations derive. Walbridge, *The Science of Mystic Lights*, p. 60. For the function of light as metaphor in *Rasâil Ikhwân al-Ṣafâ'*, see p. 20 above. The notion that God is light goes back to Plato and Plotinus. *Enneads*, VI, 9.4. Abdel-Kader, *Al-Junayd*, p. 109. Since according to al-Dabbâgh, the holy light expresses (*'ibâra 'an*) the secret of existence, life, perfection, and beauty (in the following [p. 25, ll. 20–21] he counts five elements which are bestowed: existence, life, knowledge, love, and beauty), and since the light verse is explained as a symbol, I understand



the holy light as a metaphor. Very probably he uses light as a metaphor because of the light's diffusion. This explanation may apply to his predecessors' use of the term, although I am not sure that it applies to al-Suhrawardî.

48 In philosophical language we would call these angels 'the intellects.' In the following the author calls them 'the angels which are near God' (*al-malâ'ika al-mukarrabûn*). And in p. 26, l. 5, human beings, because of their being characterized by love, are also called *mukarrabûn*.

49 This process is reminiscent of intellection which takes place in the First Intellect which perceives both the One and its own essence (*ya'qilu al-awwal wa-ya'qilu dhâtahu*). Ibn Sînâ, *al-Najât*, p. 313. Walbridge, *The Science of Mystic Lights*, p. 116.

50 *Mashâriq*, p. 23, l. 13, p. 24, l. 13.

51 Only a few poems in al-Dabbâgh's treatise are translated or referred to, since most of them are not necessary to understand his thoughts.

52 *Mashâriq*, p. 24, ll. 14–17.

53 Having been influenced by Ibn Sînâ, al-Ghazâlî employed the light verse as a parable which shows the different degrees of the rational soul. B. Abrahamov, 'Ibn Sînâ's Influence on al-Ghazâlî's Non-philosophical Works,' *Abr Nahrain* 29 (1991), pp. 8–12.

54 Arberry's trans., p. 356f.

55 Cf. Al-Ash'arî, *Maqâlât al-islâmiyyîn wa-ikhtilâf al-muṣallîn*, ed. H. Ritter, Wiesbaden 1963, p. 155.

56 *Mashâriq*, p. 24, l. 18–p. 25, l. 10.

57 Al-Dabbâgh fails to add life to the animals.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 25, l. 19–p. 26, l. 10.

59 See introduction p. 21.

60 *Mashâriq*, p. 26, l. 15–p. 27, l. 8.

61 Cf. Ibn al-Arabî, *al-Futûḥât al-makkiyya*, vol. II, p. 73, vol. IV, pp. 152, 194.

62 *Mashâriq*, p. 28, ll. 3–7. See above p. 64.

63 See above p. 76f.

64 *Mashâriq*, p. 28, ll. 8–19.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 29, ll. 3–12.

66 See above p. 66f.

67 Al-Dabbâgh's discussion of perfection, beauty, and pleasure can be regarded as the combination of the human and the emanative aspects of love. Therefore, I decided to place this discussion here.

68 *Mashâriq*, p. 39, l. 5.

69 See above p. 48f.

70 See above p. 151f, n. 17.

71 See above p. 47f. *Mashâriq*, p. 40, ll. 4–14.

72 Aristotle speaks of three faculties of the soul (*De Anima*, II), whereas Galen regards souls as divided into three types. Cf. Maimonides, *Eight Chapters*, ch. 1.

Ibn Sînâ follows Aristotle. *Al-Najât*, p. 197. Al-Dabbâgh is not consistent in using the tripartite division, for at first he points out three kinds of souls, and then three faculties of man. *Mashâriq*, p. 40, ll. 17, 23.

73 *Mashâriq*, p. 41, ll. 8–12.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 41, ll. 13–14.

75 These are Plato's four cardinal virtues. 'Iffa stands for temperance in Plato. *Laws*, 631–2. Probably following Miskawaih (Walzer, 'Aspects,' p. 66) al-Dabbâgh connects subordinate or minor virtues to each major virtue.

76 Al-Dabbâgh seems to hold the agreement of reason or philosophy with revelation when stating that the Law confirms (*ayyada*) the judgment of the intellect. Moreover, the balance of virtues is gained through the Law. The Law supplies man with practical ways to carry out good actions. It seems that the balance of virtues reflects Aristotle's view of the virtue as a mean between two vices. *Nicomachean Ethics*, II, 6, 1107a. For the relation between reason and revelation in Islamic theology see my *Islamic Theology – Traditionalism and Rationalism*, Edinburgh 1998.

77 *Mashâriq*, p. 41, l. 13, p. 42, l. 7.

78 See above p. 56.

79 See above p. 34.

80 Cf. *Mishkât*, p. 130f. See n. 120 below.

81 *Mashâriq*, p. 43, ll. 2–3. Here Al-Dabbâgh gives the impression that light is an ontological essence, a notion which is reminiscent of al-Suhrawardî's doctrine of lights. When al-Dabbâgh states that light is the most manifest thing (*aẓhar al-ashyâ'* – *Mashâriq*, p. 43, l. 3) he is very probably influenced by al-Suhrawardî's statement: 'If there is anything in existence that does not need to be made known, it is the manifest. Since there is nothing more manifest than light, there is nothing less in need of being made known.' Walbridge, *The Science of Mystic Lights*, p. 44. However, as



- we have seen (n. 47 above) in al-Dabbâgh, light serves as a metaphor for the secret of existence. In that he seems to me different from al-Suhrawardî.
- 82 This is a part of the Tradition of the Supererogatory Works (*ḥadīth al-nawâfil*) mentioned by al-Ghazâlî in the context of the special affinity between God and man. See p. 57 above.
- 83 *Ibid.*, p. 43, ll. 9–20. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, I, 6.9. This is also the view of the Neoplatonic philosopher Proclus (d. 484 A.D.). Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. I, part 2, p. 224. Al-Dabbâgh regards God's infinite attributes as deriving from three cardinal attributes: the attribute of beauty (*jamâl* – subdivisions: benefaction, compassion and so on); the attribute of majesty (*jalâl* – subdivisions: power, overcoming and so on); and the attribute of perfection (*kamâl* – subdivisions: knowledge, creation and so on). Each kind enjoins a different kind of man's behavior. The first obliges *uns* (see below), the second passing away, and the third love and longing for the beloved. *Mashâriq*, p. 69f.
- 84 Abrahamov, 'Al-Ghazâlî's Supreme Way,' p. 158. See above p. 73f.
- 85 *Mashâriq*, p. 44, l. 1.
- 86 *Ibid.*, p. 43, ll. 3–4.
- 87 Al-Ghazâlî designates the intellect light, and stresses that the intellect deserves to be called light more than the eye, for the intellect overcomes the weakness of the eye. *Mishkât*, pp. 122–128. According to al-Ghazâlî, the true and the highest light is God. *Ibid.*, p. 119. Al-Dabbâgh expresses a similar notion of God. See above pp. 44f, 49, 54.
- 88 *Mashâriq*, p. 44, ll. 12–13.
- 89 *Ibid.*, p. 45, ll. 8–22.
- 90 *Ibid.*, p. 44, ll. 16–18.
- 91 See above p. 96f.
- 92 For Plato's doctrine of Forms see F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, New York 1962, vol. I, part 1, ch. 20.
- 93 *Mashâriq*, p. 47, l. 3–p. 48, l. 4.
- 94 For internal senses see n. 28 above.
- 95 See above p. 54.
- 96 This sentence is reminiscent of Aristotle's first sentence in the *Metaphysica*: 'All men by nature desire to know.'
- 97 See above pp. 54f, 60f. Al-Ghazâlî, *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 308, ll. 9–10.
- 98 *Mashâriq*, p. 49, ll. 8–22.

- 99 Al-Dabbâgh uses here the word *ta'âshaqa* which means literally to love one another passionately.
- 100 See above pp. 50, 56f.
- 101 *Mashâriq*, p. 52. As we have seen, the view that affinity is caused by a similar state of heavenly bodies, for example, the lovers were born when a certain sign of the zodiac was in a certain place, is found in the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity (*Rasâil ikhwân al-ṣafâ*). See p. 18 above.
- 102 See above p. 50 and *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 306, ll. 13–22.
- 103 *Mashâriq*, p. 53.
- 104 *Ibid.*, p. 54, ll. 4–7.
- 105 *Ibid.*, ll. 8–21.
- 106 See pp. 1, 50 above.
- 107 *Mashâriq*, p. 54, l. 21–p. 55, l. 9. For the transformation of this Platonic myth in Arabic literature, see D. Gutas, 'Plato's *Symposion* in the Arabic Tradition,' *Oriens* 31 (1988), pp. 50–53.
- 108 See above pp. 51–59.
- 109 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, pp. 300–307.
- 110 *Mashâriq*, p. 55, l. 19–p. 56, l. 16.
- 111 *Mashâriq*, p. 30, ll. 9–10.
- 112 *Ibid.*, ll. 13–14.
- 113 *Ihyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 297, l. 27.
- 114 *Mashâriq*, p. 30, l. 3–p. 31, l. 8.
- 115 *Ibid.*, p. 31, ll. 9–18.
- 116 Cf. Bell, *Love Theory*, pp. 155–181.
- 117 The verb *aḥabba* also means 'he willed', therefore it denotes the active aspect of love.
- 118 *Mashâriq*, p. 31, l. 19–p. 32, l. 2.
- 119 Cf. G. G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, New York 1961 (rep. of the 3rd edition 1954), p. 27.
- 120 Here al-Dabbâgh seems to employ al-Ghazâlî's terminology which differentiates between the world of senses, the material world, and the divine world (*'âlam al-malakût*, the world of the divine kingdom), or the hidden world. Between these two worlds, there is an intermediate world called the world of divine powers (*'âlam al-jabarût*). Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, p. 503f. For a thorough and careful discussion of al-Ghazâlî's cosmology, see K. Nakamura, 'Imâm Ghazâlî's cosmology reconsidered with special reference to the concept of jabarût,' *Studia Islamica* 80 (1994), pp. 29–46.
- 121 *Mashâriq*, p. 31, l. 19–p. 33, l. 2.



- 122 In the list given on p. 31, *hawâ* occupies the second place, whereas in the explanation which follows it occupies the third place.
- 123 *Mashâriq*, p. 33, ll. 14–15.
- 124 *Ibid.*, p. 34, ll. 6–8.
- 125 Cf. Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 16.
- 126 The translation is based on Arberry's. The literal meaning of the last part of this verse beginning with 'God has led them astray' serves the theologians who advocated God's predetermination. See, for example, al-Ash'arî, *al-Idhâr* 'an *uṣûl al-diyâna*, Cairo n.d., p. 60.
- 127 *Mashâriq*, p. 34, ll. 9–20.
- 128 Bell brings forward Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's interpretation of *khulla* according to which it means love which is devoid of idolatry, the complete devotion to the beloved. *Love Theory*, pp. 159–162.
- 129 See above p. 159, n. 86.
- 130 *Mashâriq*, p. 35, ll. 4–13.
- 131 Usually it is defined as ecstasy. Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 160.
- 132 *Mashâriq*, p. 36, ll. 13–16.
- 133 *Ibid.*, p. 37, ll. 13–20.
- 134 The wayfarer who proceeds through stations on the mystical path.
- 135 *Ibid.*, p. 38, ll. 15–19.
- 136 *Ibid.*, p. 38, ll. 6–9.
- 137 'Weeping for the ruins' alludes to one of the famous motifs of classical love poetry in Arabic.
- 138 *Mashâriq*, p. 59, p. 61, l. 6. Cf. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, p. 504f.
- 139 See above p. 90.
- 140 This seems to mean that the form becomes an essential part of the soul.
- 141 *Mashâriq*, p. 61, ll. 7–19.
- 142 *Ibid.*, p. 62, ll. 3–12.
- 143 For this tradition see p. 57 above.
- 144 *Mashâriq*, p. 62, l. 13–p. 63, l. 2.
- 145 For the poet Majnûn (d. ca. 688 A.D.) and his beloved Laylâ, see EI2, vol. V, pp. 1102–1107.
- 146 *Mashâriq*, p. 63, ll. 3–5. The poem appears in Ibn al-'Arabî's *al-Futûḥât al-makkiyya*, vol. II, p. 337f.
- 147 Cf. a stanza of one of al-Rûmî's poems: 'Oh, I have seen my beauty in Thy Beauty I have become a mirror for Thy Image alone.' Chittic, *The Sufi Path of Love*, p. 264. The

- Swedish scientist and mystic Swedenborg uses the simile of the mirror to illustrate that although God is present in everything, He remains transcendent. 'And although the Divine is in every single created thing, still there is nothing of the absolute Divine in their Being; for the created universe is not God but from God; and because it is from God, His image is in it, somewhat as a man's image is seen in a mirror, although there is nothing there of the man himself.' *The Divine Love and Wisdom*, part I, para. 59, p. 23. The use of the sun as a metaphor for the overflow which emanates from the One goes back to Plotinus. *Enneads*, V, 3, 12.
- 148 *Mashâriq*, p. 63, ll. 6–10.
- 149 This term can be understood as both ascetic and intellectual practice.
- 150 *Mashâriq*, p. 63, l. 15–p. 64, l. 7.
- 151 See, for example, al-Ghazâlî: *fa-lâ yakûnu lahu ilâ ghayrihi nazar . . . bal nazaruhu ilâ dhâtihî*. Al-Dabbâgh: *fa-laysa lahu nazar illâ ilâ dhâtihî*.
- 152 *Mashâriq*, p. 64, ll. 9–18. See above pp. 72–74.
- 153 Usually this term means the incarnation of God in man which was regarded by the orthodox Muslims as heresy. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 144. See above p. 58.
- 154 *Mashâriq*, p. 65, ll. 12–18.
- 155 *Ibid.*, p. 67, ll. 7–8.
- 156 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 323, ll. 1–5. See above p. 75f.
- 157 *Mashâriq*, p. 67, ll. 12–17.
- 158 *Ibid.*, p. 68, ll. 2–6.
- 159 Al-Ghazâlî, *Mishkât*, p. 175. Cf. Al-Sarrâj, *Kitâb al-luma'*, p. 351f.
- 160 In *Mishkât* (pp. 175–185), al-Ghazâlî makes a distinction between three kinds of people who are veiled (*maḥjûb*) from God: a. Those who are veiled only by darkness such as the unbelievers who deny the existence of God; b. those who are veiled by pure lights (*maḥḍ al-anwâr*) such as people who know the real meanings of God's attributes and that it is impossible to ascribe the meanings of man's attributes of power and knowledge to God. Notwithstanding, they argue that God, who is free of human meanings of attributes, is the mover of the heaven and its director, a view rejected by al-Ghazâlî; and c. those who are veiled by light mingled with darkness such as people who affirm the existence of God,



but because of the influence of their senses on them, they worship idols.

I only give a few examples of the various groups mentioned by al-Ghazâlî. His goal is to show that the highest rank of man believes in God who is totally transcendent. In that he expresses a Neoplatonic idea. For a case of belief in God's transcendence in terms of Neoplatonic philosophy, see my 'Abbâd ibn Sulaymân on God's Transcendence, Some Notes,' *Der Islam* 71, 1 (1994), pp. 109-120.

- 161 *Mashâriq*, p. 68, l. 8-p. 69, l. 2. See above p. 76f. Many scholars make a distinction between *shawq* and *ishtiyâq*. Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 170.
- 162 *Ibid.*, p. 70, ll. 8-9. See above p. 79.
- 163 *Idlâl* means a kind of self-pride. Smith, *al-Muḥâsibî*, p. 138.
- 164 *Mashâriq*, p. 71, ll. 18-19.
- 165 Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 55.
- 166 *Mashâriq*, p. 72, ll. 1-3. Schimmel, *ibid.*, p. 49. For these sayings in Ṣūfism, see C. E. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*, Albany 1985.
- 167 *Mashâriq*, p. 74, ll. 13-16. See above p. 81f.
- 168 *Ibid.*, p. 75, ll. 14-17.
- 169 *Ibid.*, p. 76, l. 12-p. 77, l. 9.
- 170 Fear appears in al-Ghazâlî as one of the lovers' signs. See above p. 79f.
- 171 *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 155, l. 13.
- 172 *Ibid.*, p. 142, l. 1 from the bottom.
- 173 *Mashâriq*, p. 77, l. 13-p. 78, l. 2. Al-Ghazâlî (*Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, pp. 164-167) deals with the question of which station is preferable, hope or fear in the context of man's behavior.
- 174 *Mashâriq*, p. 78, ll. 3-7. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 128f.
- 175 *Mashâriq*, p. 78, ll. 8-11. Cf. al-Ghazâlî, *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 398. In al-Ghazâlî this station is not a part of the love for God, but appears with *muḥâsaba* in the eighth book of the fourth volume of the *Iḥyâ'* which is entitled 'The Book of Inspection and Reckoning' (*Kitâb al-murâqaba wa'l-muḥâsaba*).
- 176 *Mashâriq*, p. 78, l. 19-p. 79, l. 4. Cf. Maimonides, *The Guide*, p. 457, ll. 12-15.
- 177 *Mashâriq*, p. 79, ll. 8-13.

- 178 *Ibid.*, p. 79, l. 16-p. 80, l. 1.
- 179 Chittick (*The Sufi Path of Love*, p. 304f) rightly notes the connection between the word *ghayra* (jealousy) and *ghayr* (other). For example, God is 'jealous' means that he detests the denial of 'others' of his right to be the only god.
- 180 *Mashâriq*, p. 80, l. 17-p. 82, l. 9. Cf. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, pp. 525-527.
- 181 Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 171.
- 182 Usually in Ṣūfî literature *munâjâ* applies to the mystical prayer. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
- 183 *Mashâriq*, p. 82, l. 10-p. 83, l. 18. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 172.
- 184 Cf. al-Sarrâj, *Kitâb al-Luma*, p. 345.
- 185 Al-Qushayrî, *al-Risâla*, p. B. R. Von Schlegell (trans.), *Principles of Sufism*, Berkeley 1990, pp. 202-205.
- 186 See, for example, Al-Ghazâlî, *Iḥyâ'*, vol. IV, p. 246f.
- 187 *Mashâriq*, p. 84. Elsewhere (*ibid.*, p. 89, ll. 2-3) al-Dabbâgh states that each state is a perfection in relation to a rank below it and an imperfection in relation to a rank above it.
- 188 Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 418.
- 189 *Mashâriq*, p. 85.
- 190 Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love*, p. 264. See above p. 64f.
- 191 Lit. 'Union is a rational matter in the mind not outside it.' *Mashâriq*, p. 87, l. 9. Later (p. 96, l. 16) he states that the meaning of '*ishq*' is this rational union.
- 192 *Mashâriq*, p. 86f.
- 193 *Ibid.*, p. 89, ll. 5-10.
- 194 *Ibid.*, p. 90, ll. 3-13.
- 195 According to al-Jurjânî, so long as the mystic is ascending from station to station, he is called unsteady (*ṣâhib talwîn* lit. a man who has various stations), but when he attains his goal of conjunction with God, he is firmly rooted in this station. *Kitâb al-ta'rîfât*, ed. G. Flügel, Beirut 1978 (rep. of Leipzig 1845), p. 70.
- 196 *Mashâriq*, p. 90, l. 15-p. 91, l. 1.
- 197 *Mashâriq*, p. 88, ll. 7-18.
- 198 Cf. Singer, *The Nature of Love*, chs. 2, 3.
- 199 *Mashâriq*, p. 91, ll. 15-20.
- 200 *Ibid.*, p. 92, ll. 9-13.
- 201 *Ibid.*, p. 92, l. 15-p. 94, l. 4. For another meaning of *al-tamkîn fî'l-aḥwâl* see n. 195 above.



## REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

- 1 For the title see fol. 3b. The two manuscripts of the same work (Shaydhala1, and 2) were described by Fenton, p. 52.

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